

SPIN

MADONNA
CONFESSES

U2
INTERVIEW

FRANKIE
GOES TO
HELL

FELA:
SOUL REBEL
BEHIND BARS

WALLY GEORGE:
T.V. MADMAN

STRYPER:
HEAVY METAL
FOR GOD

BRYAN FERRY
BRONSKI BEAT
SADE
RUN-DMC
REPLACEMENTS
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Volume One Number One
May 1985

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TOPSPIN

Who's Who, What's What and Why

Somebody once asked me, when this magazine was still pencil drawings in borrowed sketch pads, what made me see a need for SPIN. I replied there was no need for SPIN.

The world needs a lot of things before it needs more magazines. However, I thought a lot of people might want SPIN, including myself. For too long the music and youth culture press has deteriorated, from the fiercely challenging, imaginative and sharp-witted force it was a generation ago, to either a slick homogeneity on the one, older side, or a mostly babbling, incoherent discredit on the other. Gone are the passions and the excitement of rock 'n' roll. There are few clear, bright reflections of its free and open spirit.

The exceptions are admirable: Some of the underground and local press, and some radio stations, resist the pale and obvious formats. But even FM radio, once the strongest, sweetest voice of the rock 'n' roll choir, has dissipated for the most part to weakly apologetic mumbles, repeating and recycling the same Top 40 music and spiritless commentary, dropping into a sort of mind-numbing, indistinct chant. MTV is colorful and cheerfully noisy, but television naturally stunts itself, because it cannot allow its audience the pleasure of using their own imaginations.

Since you've probably bought this copy (or stolen it), I won't try to sell you. In fact, I wouldn't try anyway; truly good things don't need selling very hard, just put them in front of people who want truly good things. SPIN is the result of a lot of inspiration, a lot of hard work, a lot of fun, and a lot of luck. All four elements combined, so that most of the inspiration came out of the fun, most of the fun grew out of the work, and all of it came together under the consistent, timely intervention of luck!

We brought some incredible talent together—that was most of the good luck—and the magazine reflects the successful chemistry. From the beginning, we wanted SPIN to communicate the passion and energy of the subjects the magazine would cover. We were determined to fill every issue with the real excitement of music, wherever it was from, and in whatever form, from top to muddy bottom. We were also fanatically determined not to fall into the same trap as the music press we were criticizing—that of being safe instead of adventurous, remote instead of intimate, and blandly similar instead of individualistic.

As SPIN grew, we saw how music reporting had become neatly mechanical, as if this generation's musicians were being held in a giant media jukebox. That was not for us. We wanted to say something worth saying, not just add to the

unilateral chorus. Stretch our minds in order to stretch yours. Discover, not just witness (and, therefore, look, not just wait to be shown). Inject wit and illuminations, not cynicism and shadow. We wanted to have fun, and we do. Echoing a great Irishman, George Bernard Shaw, we take our jobs seriously, ourselves never.

But, enough about the magazine, let's talk about us!

Basically, we're all great. Ed Rasen, who with this issue set a new publishing record for most bylines and credits ever in a single edition of a national publication, is undoubtedly the greatest (also the largest and the only armed member of the staff). In all (fleeting) seriousness, SPIN would not be as good as it is if it wasn't for Ed.

Incidentally, he set another record, one that I'm not so quick to encourage. In one day, by discovering that if he promoted himself no one would notice/care/know how to tell him not to, he rose from the obviously gratuitous assignment of West Coast editor to Executive Editor, passing through senior, articles and features rank in short order. We made three sets of business cards for him before brilliantly deciding to wait till the end of the day.

Anchoring it all from the beginning were Arthur Mogil and Felice Arden. Art is dizzyingly bright and equally hard-working and conscientious—who else would charge me for taking petty cash out of my own company! He is, however, deluded in his perception of his sex appeal to women, which he thinks is as large as his appetite, which, so you may understand, I will explain like this: if he decided not to eat for a week, he could singlehandedly become Band Aid III.

Felice made the riskiest decision of her career to join the then-unborn SPIN. Our dummy issue was a collection of pencil drawings. She saw in those what I hope you see in this magazine, and what you see here owes a great deal to her drive and imagination.

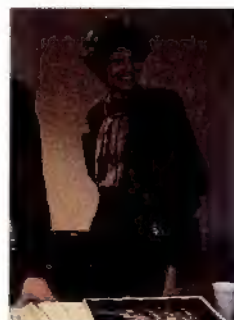
Rudy Langlais came in through an open window, or door, one day and stayed, and I know God sent him, too. His instincts, like Ed's, are gifted.

Gregg Weatherby is the sort of managing editor publishers dream of. Drinks champagne out of a mug, which I think says a lot about him, or about the sort of champagne we drink around here.

Glenn O'Brien is as talented as he thinks he is. He recommended Scott Cohen to us, who comes up with a tremendous volume of ideas. Scott then recommended Glenn (they both recommended George DuBoise, but this is getting complicated). Scott and Glenn may well be in league with each other, but their contributions to SPIN are invaluable. They brought to this magazine a



Fran Jenik



Fran Jenik



Mark Weiss



David Burnett

level of journalism and humor not usually found in the English language.

Jessica Berens edits Flash, writes for other parts of the magazine, and is a star. Diane Luger art directed this issue through a hailstorm of deadline difficulties, and she and George, and the others who helped, especially Mark and Mila, did magnificently under pressure. Ditto Sue Cummings, our editorial assistant and future star.

On the business side, Diana Holtzberg, Nina Jorgensen and Rhonda Pinzer do super-human jobs.

SPIN is special because these people are.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

It took many people to put SPIN together. Good, kind, intelligent and hard-working people. But these are some of the people who are going to grab the credit anyway. Top, from left to right: Scott Cohen (holding banana), Bob Guccione Jr., Glenn O'Brien, Arthur Mogil, Gregg Weatherby, and an unnamed undercover cop. Center, left: Ed Rasen (in white shirt), who was in Beirut when he accepted the job. He thought we said "lock 'n' load" magazine. It was a bad phone connection. Center, right: Felice Arden, associate publisher, and basically the franchise. Bottom, left: David Lee Roth, who wrote the Low Riders article for us. You might think we used his picture partly to capitalize on his enormous celebrity. You wouldn't be wrong. His piece, though, is excellent. Bottom, right: Jessica Berens. What more can we say? She's talented, funny, argumentative, and doesn't smoke.

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Material chronology prawem autorskim

**Trubee
(or not Trubee)**

FLASH

Smooth Operator Sade; Band Aid II;
Malcolm McLaren; Jason and the
Scorchers; Da BoDeans; Java breaking;
Cassidy comeback; Maori Pop.
Plus, So What.

Edited by Jessica Berens



Ugly Janitors of America: Top row, left to right; Hugh Schick, Jack Veas, Ophir Shur, M.B. Gordy, Larry Lajmer. Bottom: Marc Mylar, John Trubee.

Have you ever wanted to kill someone? Have you ever wanted to confront all the ninny tormentors of your life and strangle them until their eyes bugged out, and then kick them down a long flight of stairs? Have the tedious days ever accumulated so heavily upon your aching shoulders that you burst with a passion to tell the world to go to hell?

For years John Trubee has felt these things and sought ways of expressing the frustrations which most people suppress or deny. Various described by critics as a "weirdo," a "mutant artist," and an "obnoxious asshole," Trubee has labored for the past several years in Los Angeles, performing and recording his unique musical compositions and surreal poetry to affront an indifferent world.

Performing with his band, The Ugly Janitors of America, Trubee screams, moans, rants, and babbles while tossing props such as stuffed animals and rubber dildos. Many club patrons are angered and disgusted by John's antics, but he is not discouraged or intimidated by their threats or beer bottles, having endured a tormented childhood.

Born in Rapid City, South Dakota, on February 27, 1957, Trubee was raised in Princeton, New Jersey, a place he seems happy to have escaped. "My hometown is a hellhole of vicious, greedy, shallow philistines," screams John, as his face turns bright red from anger. "It's the snottiest place in the world."

The city fathers of Princeton haven't erected any monuments honoring John, but he is well remembered as the demented leader of the teen combo Gloop Nox and The Stik People. We don't have the space or time to discuss their questionable accomplishments, but rock historians agree they were few. Needless to say, John did not go to Princeton University; and, for unknown reasons, the Berklee College of Music doesn't feature him in its ads, though its illustrious staff supposedly educated him.

Upon arriving in California in 1980, Trubee began performing with longtime childhood cohort and local noise-monger Zoogz Rift. At various gigs with Rift, Trubee "in order to stir up trouble," distributed cassette tapes of

his music, prank telephone calls, and electronic noise. Eventually, Bill Hein, president of Enigma Records, hoping to gain notoriety or just halt John's incessant calls, recorded some examples of the music, noise, and prank calls. The full-length album *The Communists Are Coming to Kill Us* by Trubee and The Ugly Janitors of America, and the priceless 45 single "A Blind Man's Penis," qualify for consideration as the weirdest records of all time.

The album features such classics as "Dumping Buckets of Phlegm on Bitchy Old Ladies," and "Satan Pukes on the High School Cheerleaders," both originally recorded in Boston during 1978. "The Last Bird" was recorded in April 1976 in the basement of Jim Nevius' house in Yardley, Pennsylvania. John says it is his "favorite recording from that time period." Then again it could be the only recording. "Goddamn College Girl" was first recorded during May 1978, in Trenton, New Jersey, at the Third Biennial Delaware Valley Festival of the Avant-Garde. Just in case you question John's ability to write rock 'n' roll lyrics, this excerpt will eliminate any doubts:

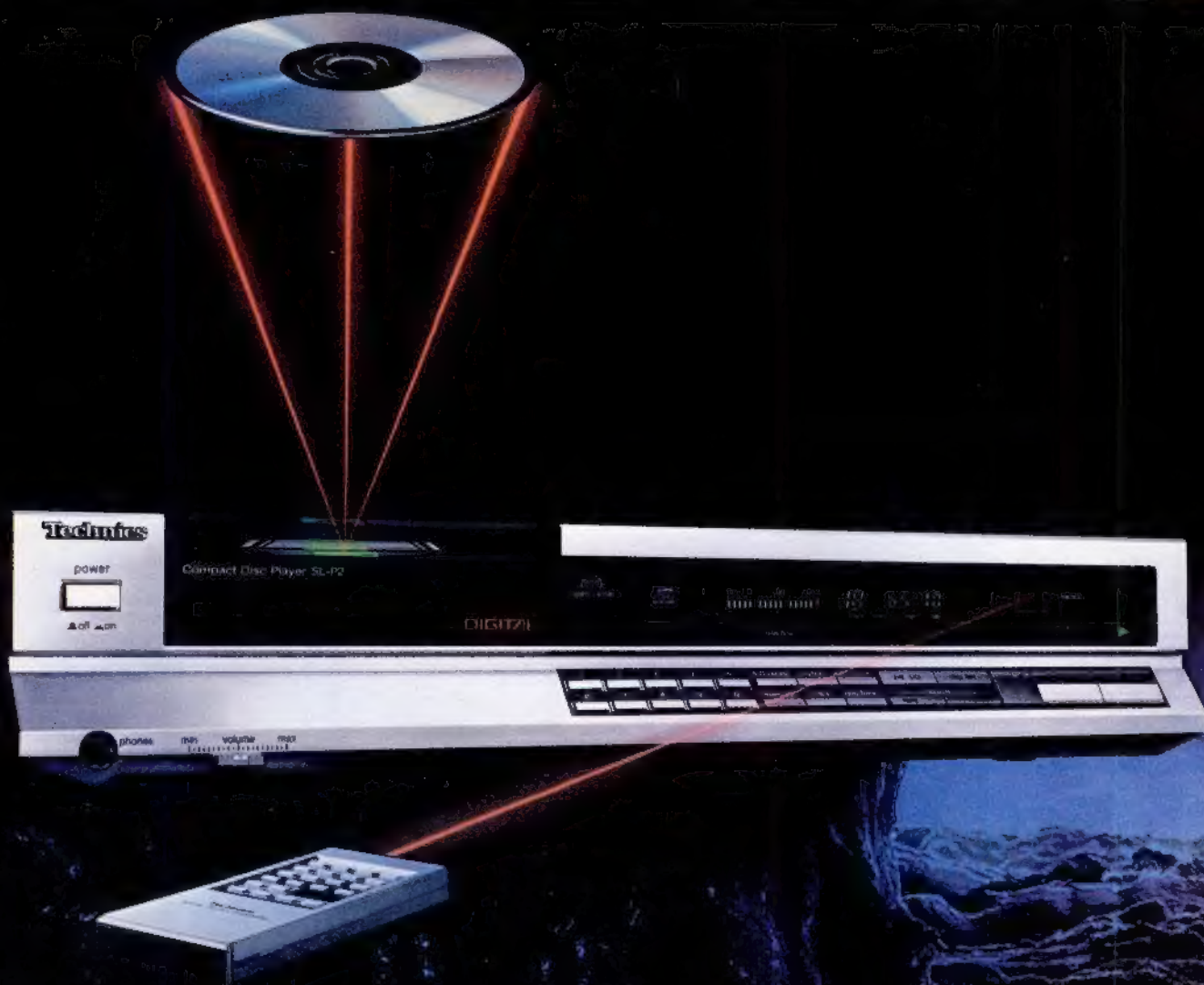
I'm a goddamn college girl
and I'm not too bright
I love to flirt a lot
but my pussy is sewn tight

I listen to Barry Manilow
and start to cry a lot
then I blow my nose
in a kleenex full of snot

I like to make love
but not with anyone
he's got to have broad
shoulders
and talk real dumb.

Bruce Springsteen eat your heart out.

More contemporary hits include "Chris Leadem Describes Hell." Chris was the drummer in Gloop Nox, and now is another malcontent poet. "Queen of Angels" was recorded in March 1983 at the Anti Club in Los Angeles while John was in the emergency room of Queen of Angels Hospital. He had dislocated his shoulder while performing acrobatics during the sound check for the performance. Don Buchanan improvised screams while John



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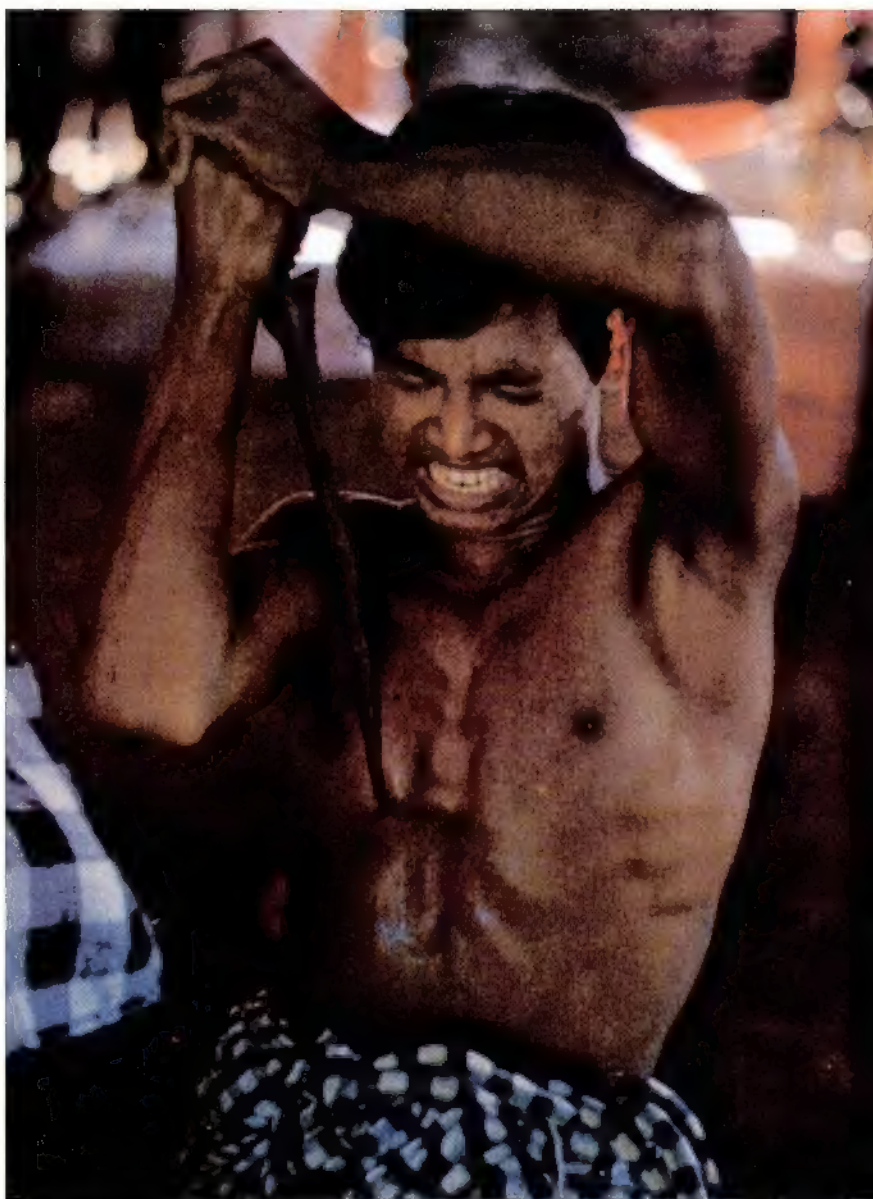
Sharkey played clarinet, and Ophir Shur manipulated synthesizers and electric piano.

Trubee's contributions to the *Radio Tokyo Tapes* Vol. 2 compilation album and Harvey Kubernik's spoken-word anthologies reveal a cornucopia of bizarre imagery and beautifully strange music. Unfortunately, most people remain unaware of these masterpieces, just as they are of releases by Space & Time Tapes, John's cassette label. Titles include *Drowning in a Society of Snot*, *Calls to Idiots*, and *The Last Dwarf Drops His Pants*. If you must own these collector's items, write John in care of P.O. Box 2896, Torrance, CA 90509. Remember, just send money, or a mere \$5.00 for each tape.

Much of Trubee's alleged creative accomplishments reflect his personal frustrations. "Is the purpose of life just to get rich, get laid, score dope, and buy things in order to impress idiots?" asks John in his usual obnoxious manner. Before anyone can answer, he screams, "Those things mean nothing to me." All John wants to do is sequester himself in his apartment and write music. "Is that too much?" yells the Ugly Janitor as spittle dribbles down his chin. Evidently it is, as the wild and crazy guy must by day masquerade as a clerk in the nuts-and-bolts department of a hardware store.

Presently, John is arranging bookings for the Ugly Janitors and preparing material for a second Enigma album. He warns: "I'm gonna keep making this music even if it kills me." Keep up the good work John.

—John Trubee



An Old Partridge Flies Back

David Cassidy has just recorded a new album in London.

Though he was only 19 years old when he first became famous as Keith Partridge of the Partridge Family, he's now approaching his 35th birthday.

He used to be coloring books, pillow cases, lunch boxes, postcards, comic books, sweatshirts, bubble gum cards, pencils and dresses; but now he just wants to be himself. "People didn't consider that I was actually real, that I could sit and talk and think," he told a British newspaper. "I wanted people

to see me and talk to me, but it was impossible. I became an emotional cripple—I had no friends and no chance of making any."

In 1975: "I had become a freak attraction to the kids. My world was a hideous fantasy. I didn't have a life any more. I hated to get up each day, because I despised myself... that's why I couldn't change places with Michael Jackson for anything because he's even more isolated than I was." So he quit. Disguising himself in sloppy clothes, an old hat and glasses, he roamed around the world discovering himself. Before long he had become such a familiar figure in far-flung jungles that native children would rush up to their mothers yelling, "I just saw David Cassidy." "Who's he?" their mothers would

reply.

1976: He recorded "Gettin' It On In The Streets," with Mick Ronson. It flopped.

1978: He established a series of comebacks, this time appearing in a police series on television. It flopped. The same year he married actress Kay Lenz. The marriage flopped.

1982: It is rumored that he attempted a comeback, recording a country-based album in Nashville. It never came out.

1985: After a couple of years without comebacks, he thought that it was time for another. His latest single, released in the UK, is called "The Last Kiss." "This time, I'll be in control," he says. "I'll take care of my business."

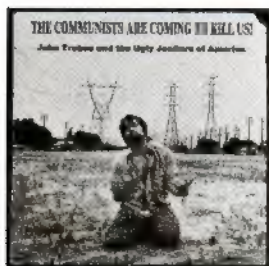
—Craig Brown

Java

If you drilled a hole in New York City, you would come out on the other side of the world, probably on the fabled islands of Indonesia. Formerly called the East Indies or the Spice Islands, inhabitants dress in colorful costumes, perform exotic rituals and worship a host of spirits and demons. In the capital city of Jakarta, on the main island of Java, police recently broke up a dance contest when native youths switched from traditional frenzy dancing (in which participants go into a strange, otherworldly trance) to breakdancing.

Local government officials banned the American street style that has swept Indonesia, saying "it's not compatible with the Indonesian culture." When the cops moved onto the dance floor and stopped the somersaults, spins and jerks, about 4000 people began throwing rocks and bottles at them. Unfortunately, the riot prevented a dance contest winner from being chosen. We dispatched our correspondent, Gordon Bishop, to the capital. His report:

"To say this place is weird is to miss the point. Weird means 'normal' here, where it's legal for people to go into frenzied trances, stab themselves with razor-sharp swords, become wild pigs rolling in the mud, brooms sweeping the floor or generally to run amok (which is one of the few Indonesian words to enter the English language). But breakdancing is outlawed!"



Not yet available in CD.

Yakety Yak

Our philosophy has always been to do anything to become famous.

—Dee Snider

Success is like having a one-night stand with Lady Di.

—John Waite



Louder/Globe Photos

"I'll make sure that if they have a photo of me on a cornflakes package, then at least it'll be a nice one."



America comes home to Jim Beam.

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Sade

Sade Adu is like her songs—smooth, elegant and beautifully arranged. A coffee-colored queen in voluminous macho shirts, hooped earrings and tailored Jean-Paul Gaultier overcoat, her hair is scraped back from a wide-angle forehead under which shining eyes dart like beetles. But, it is the undulating mouth which dominates; almost a show on its own. It gapes to reveal cavernous depths of impossibly white teeth and emits the moody growl which can be heard on her current album, *Diamond Life*.

A sultry collection of elegantly molded dance numbers, last year the album eased nonchalantly into the number two spot in the UK charts and produced three hit singles. Suddenly, Sade (pronounced Shaday, not like the Marquis) is a star. Everyone wants to take her picture. Record royalties allowed her to move from the North London dive she shared with her journalist boyfriend, and fame forced her to skulk around in elaborate disguise. It was all rather unexpected. She had intended to be a fashion designer and studied the craft at St. Martins art school, a disgracefully trendy mecca for the rag trade's young elite. Her evenings were spent looking good and dancing, until she met a funk outfit called Pride. Their manager, Lee Barrett, asked her, "by the way, can you sing?" "Sure. And I can write songs too."

Pride's line-up was reshuffled and Stuart Mathewman (now co-song writer) appeared with his friend, bassist Paul S. Denman. The band lost their funky feel and took Sade's name. This year they (or more accurately their record company) made the logical move and released *Diamond Life* here, together with the singles "Hang on to Your Love" and "Smooth Operator."

The jazz-tinged nature and melodic moodiness of Sade's songs have culled comparisons to torch singers such as Billie Holiday, a compliment which she eschews. "One bloke approached an entire interview as if I was trying to be a jazz musician. I've never said that. I've never even tried it. And if we did we'd do a darn sight better job than we are doing now." The jazz tradition is apparent in her work, but soul is her spur. She grew

up listening to Marvin Gaye, James Brown and Aretha Franklin. Herein lies the problem with Sade. What is soul? And does she have it? The genre is so far removed from the days when its grandfather Ray Charles combined R&B with gospel music, inspiring everyone from James Brown to Otis Redding. What qualifies anyone nowadays to be a soul singer? A religious background? Colored skin? A deprived childhood? A voice which cracks with torment and struggle? A spandex suit? What began as a subversive and heartfelt rebel yell was ripped off by the white musicians of the '60s and diluted by disco. Now the term is so vague that it cries out for new definition and identity. One can only react subjectively. "When Am I Gonna Make a Living," and "Sally" are certainly expressive, but the marriage of *Diamond Life*'s hard-edged polish to Sade's guttural singing voice is an uneasy one in some ways. Her delivery could be misconstrued as professional suffering, crocodile tears shed for the public. Soul meunière. After all, aren't her promotions people trying to get her on MTV? Isn't she adequately fed? Well-adjusted? Just a glamorous middle-class girl with a voice? Not exactly.

"Of course I've struggled, in every way," she rasps. "I've never had anything come easily to me other than the creative side." She was raised in Holland-on-Sea, one of the less ritzy British coastal resorts: an uncomfortable cluster of shoebox-like bungalows whose only sign of life is the twitching of lace curtains. It is not Harlem, but it is not Bel-Air either.

"It is where the working class people retire who have been there on holiday, liked it, and buy a house for when they grow old. It's full of poodles and no poodle parlors."

"My mother struggled a hell of a lot. She was a white woman who had two brown children in the early '60s and came to England with one suitcase and nowhere to live. Nothing really." Sade's father, a lecturer, remained in Nigeria where Sade lived until the age of 11. "I am fairly classless because it is very difficult to class someone who comes from a mixed marriage. There isn't a class structure in Nigeria, there's a tribal structure and prestige as far as money is concerned. My mother comes from a family

where her mother was very working-class and her father was middle-class stroke artsy-fartsy. My grandfather grew up in a commune and my Auntie Phil still lives in one in Farmington, Connecticut." The rest of the Adu clan is scattered; she has two half sisters in Switzerland and another she has never seen.

Sade's appeal has already been proved by her sales figures in Europe, figures which she thinks came about because, "Most things around are very similar in every respect, the music and the way people look. In order to be in a band, you have to have certain colors in your hair—still! Our image is striking because it is different, not because it is particularly outstanding. The public has not got such

bad taste after all, if you know what I mean. There are quite a lot of fairly intelligent people around who, if allowed to make their own decisions, will."

This year the fairly intelligent American will be allowed to make his own decision about Sade. Her looks will work for her commission-free, as will her down-to-earth approach and unpretentious charm. One problem she does face, because of a heavier emphasis on her heritage, is deciding whether to present herself as a black or white artist. One may not wish to differentiate between the two, but the music industry requires it.

"I don't like the segregation," she says. "Music is something which should be available to all people. When you go into a club there is no color bar

on the dance floor, so why should it apply to radio stations? Unfortunately it does. It does not only apply to black and white, it also applies to heavy metal, pop, all that. It's such a big place with such big corporations everywhere that in order to feel safe they have to categorize things."

"I've always listened to black music because I like the sound of the black voice, so it wouldn't be bad to be successful in the same place I have always loved. But I usually figure if something is good enough people find it anyway, and you're gonna get the exposure and ultimately spread. The only reason people picked up on us in the first place was because we had an audience."

—Jessica Berens



Stefano Morsimo

Jason and the Scorchers

About three years ago, a prematurely balding boy just off an Illinois hog farm, and three punk rockers from Country Music City made their intentions clear with a recording of Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" that mutated from weepy ballad to head-banging raveup in mid-song and knocked rockabilly freaks on their twitching asses. Since then, Jason and the Scorchers have howled their way to the forefront of the musically suspect genre of country punk. They've produced an EP *Fervor*, lauded by New York Times popcrit Robert Palmer; put a video of "Absolutely Sweet Marie" on MTV; signed with EMI America, and routinely sold out halls in Europe.

What distinguishes the Scorchers from limp cowpunk acts like Rubber Rodeo and Blood on the Saddle is roots. Farmboy singer Jason Ringenberg was raised on country and rockabilly. Guitarist Warner Hodges, in addition to tenure in struggling Nashville heavy metal and punk bands, is the son of a picker for Johnny Cash. Drummer Perry Baggs learned harmony at the knee of his gospel-singing father.

The band's trademark is two-stepping through a lilting country tune and then bounding full speed into a thrashing rocker. Hodges leaps, grins and smokes a cig through his nose; Ringenberg leers, reels, and careens around the stage like a farmhand on speed.

It works. The explosiveness of Jerry Lee Lewis is reinterpreted for kids raised on the Sex Pistols and Motley Crue. Ringenberg's lyrics, like Jerry Lee's, reflect the prospects of sin and salvation.

"Damned for all time! To walk both sides of the line," he sings. It seems that the mysterious persona—maybe Jason himself—is going to walk in the shadow between right and wrong until, say, Judgment Day. Jason's not kidding either; whether he's a prophet or a lunatic is your decision.

—Mike Cornwell, Peter Wilson

Yakety Yak

There are idiots in England, there are idiots in Australia, but most of the idiots are in America.

—Boy George

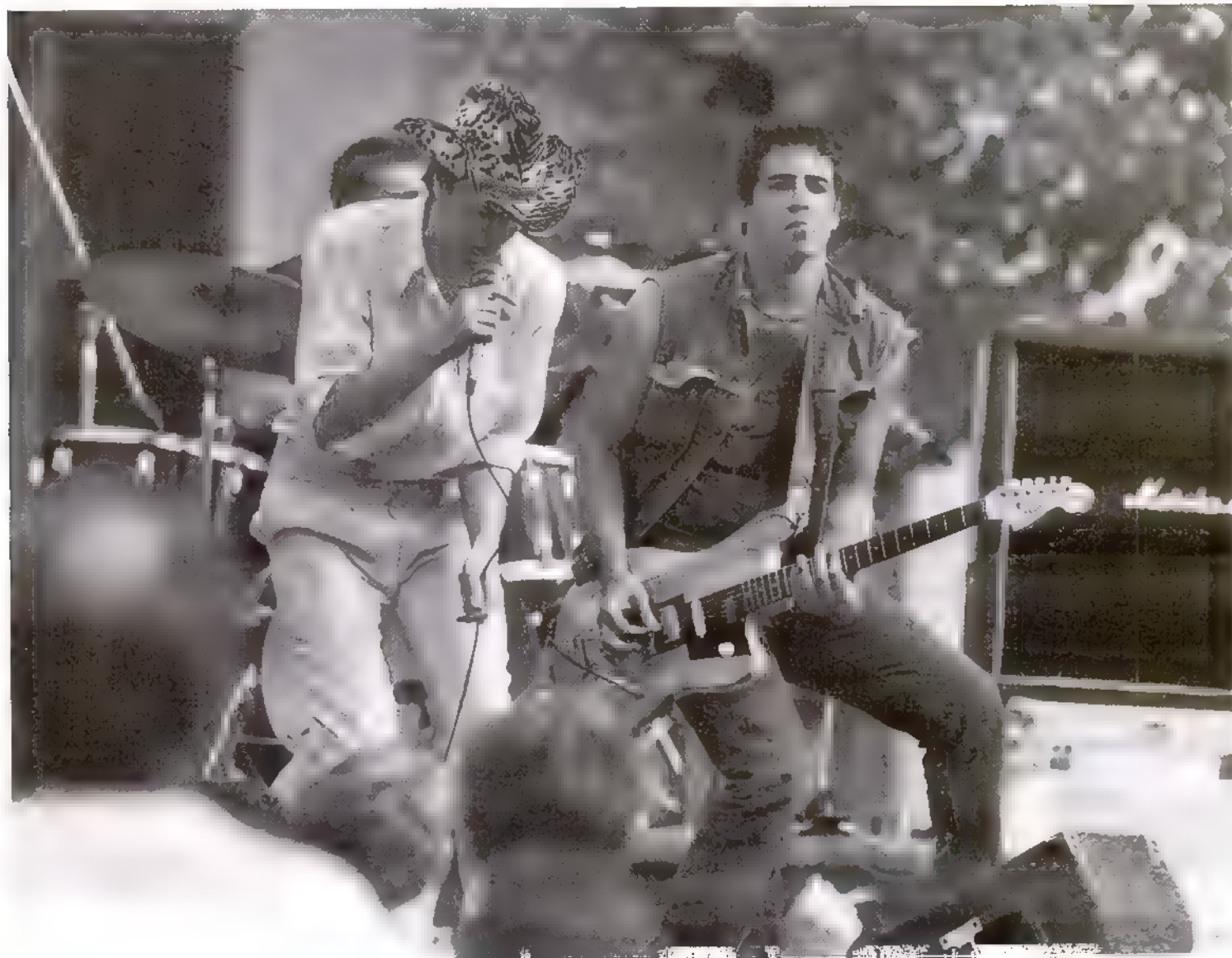
Anyone who calls me a drag queen or a transvestite is an idiot.

—Boy George

Below, the Scorchers.

UNDERSTANDING MEDIA

5: THE PUNDITS



New Zealand's culture club

The Violent Femmes were looking for something a little different in the way of an opening act for their recent tour—and they found it—a 32-member pop group composed of Maori tribespersons from the wilds of New Zealand. The Maoris are noted for their ornate carving and intricate facial tattoos rather than their pop music, but the Patea Maori Club is changing all that. The 'club' had a hit single back home with "Poi-E", described as the country's first reggae poi song. Their album *Aku Raukura*, which features a "monster USA breakdance mix," went double platinum last year.

Members of the Patea Maori Club range from 13 to 60 years old, wear traditional folk costumes (as yet unnoticed by Malcolm McLaren) play poi (a dancing device comprising a ball on a string to symbolize the flight of a bird), picture dance, breakdance and sing. Mark Van Hecke, who manages the Femmes explains why they chose the Maoris. "It all started when we visited New Zealand last year. We made friends with Dalvanius and stayed in Wanganui in a ceremonial house where we were treated like kings. The Patea community had suffered a terrible depression following the closure of a plant but "Poi E" was a Top 10 hit for about 13 weeks (a record for a locally produced disc) and the royalties were ploughed back into the community. Now the Maori Club are New Zealand's official cultural ambassadors." Producer Dalvanius sees a bright future for contemporary Polynesian music and aims to make his Maui record label the Southern Hemisphere's answer to Motown.

Meanwhile the Violent Femmes, whose eclectic compositions encompass everything from gospel to country, have gone into rehearsals ready to work on their album. "We will be returning to rock and roll," promises Van Hecke.

—J.B.

Yakety Yak

Anyone that saintly should be taken down a peg or two.

—John Cleese, on Mother Teresa



MAUI
records

**PATEA
MAORI CLUB**

Reggae's mad scientist

When people said to Bob Marley that his friend Lee "Scratch" Perry was mad, Marley would reply, "Him not mad, him just Scratch."

They were not always persuaded. Indeed, one of Mr. Perry's several epithets is "The Mad Scientist," which took on its true meaning when he trashed his Black Art recording studios in Kingston, Jamaica, and spent several months planting small black crosses on every available square inch of his property. He also changed his name to Pipecock Jackson for a short time and for no apparent reason.

"It's great to be mad . . . it's a pleasure," cackles Lee.

We are squashed together in the tiny back room of a North London record shop, drinking cooking sherry. "My brain that I make records from," he continues, "is real mad. Mad in love, not in destruction. Positive madness. Love madness. All of my best records I make when I am mad with positive love. The

things people are afraid of, that is what I want."

Scratch earned his nickname from the title of the records (precursors to today's scratch DJs) which he produced in the '60s. A tiny, wiry Jamaican with mad, wise eyes, he was a mentor to Marley and the brainpower behind such reggae greats as Junior Murvin, Max Romeo and The Congos, whom he worked with in the mid '70s. His personal repertoire includes celebrated instrumental albums such as *Double Seven*.

Recently, Scratch left Jamaica and moved to London. He is talking with Paul McCartney, whom he worked with during the mid '70s in Kingston, about a possible project. He recently released *History, Mystery and Prophecy* on his own in Britain, because Island mysteriously declined to, although they distributed it here on their Mango label. Upset though he is, he says there are more important things than material success.

"Keep who you are," he warns. "Protect your soul. If you do not retain your soul,

you are in bad trouble. Where is your soul? It is on the bottom of your foot: walk on the earth with your sole to keep your soul. A man who believes in himself and has faith in himself, rules his mind and his destiny. His mind will love him because he loves it. Destiny will love him because he loves it."

Ah. That explains everything.

—Chris Salewicz

Is Coke It?

Fifty-four-year-old Frederick Koch from Guilford, Vermont, would like the world to know that he has "absolutely no comment" to make about the change of his name to Coke Is It. He hit upon this entertaining epithet because no one could pronounce his real name correctly, they kept saying it like Mayor Koch rather than the popular fizzy beverage. Now the cola people have filed a suit seeking to prevent poor Fred from using his new name and, following a story in the New



York Times, he has been besieged by wierd telephone calls. "The sooner it dies the better," he moaned.

Fred is listed on the court records as It, Coke Is.

Yakety Yak

In America, you watch TV and think that's totally unreal. Then you step outside and it's just the same.

—Joan Armatrading

A fright at the opera

What is Malcolm McLaren now? He was the perverse packager of the Sex Pistols. He gave Adam Ant his pirate look and Bow Wow Wow, from which he says he once fired Boy George, their Zulu tribal rhythms. Two years ago he applied his sleight of hand to square dancing, hip hop and Cuban drums, coming up with *Duck Rock*. Now, the magician—illusionist?—presents *Fans*, an album that combines Puccini and Bizet with R&B. Is he an avant-garde artist or Phantom of the Opera?

In his suite at New York's chic Morgan hotel, McLaren is having trouble deciding what to wear, let alone what he is. He buzzes around in boxer shorts and a chocolate-brown shirt in a brightly colored diamond pattern. With his expression of perpetual surprise and his pale orange pop-up coiffure, he looks like a court jester primed for action. At 37, McLaren seems . . . ten, a bemused, wayward boy rather than the heartless manipulator depicted by his press and legend.

Bustling from room to room, he describes his new projects. He has just completed a film treatment of *Beauty and the Beast*. Written with Kit Carson (coauthor with Sam Shepard of *Paris, Texas*), the legend will be reset in the present-day New York fashion world. And he says there is considerable interest from Broadway in staging *Fans*.

The album has the barest bones of such operatic stories as *Madam Butterfly* and *Carmen*, which McLaren has tricked out in funky splendor. Brilliant shards of arias from soprano Betty Ann White sail above seething beat boxes. Rapturous R&B sung by Angie B. and Deborah Cole are woven with an arch commentary by—who else?

So are his fans paying attention? "Yeah, kids will come up to me and tell me, 'I think it's cool, man, how you have them singing off the beat.' And: 'That title "Madam Butterfly" (his single)—how'd you ever come up with that?' " I wonder who they are, these inquisitive followers? "A number of boys between the ages of 12 and 14 who live in Mississippi and Alabama," he says with pleasure.

McLaren spent his own youth "putting lots of rouge on my face and behaving, in a

Jewish suburb, like a raving harlequin. I think I spent most of the time figuring out where to go in the evenings. Usually I had to creep out of the house because I looked a sight. I never got involved with girls until I was 21 because I was totally shy.

"My father was Scottish but I never knew him. He was apparently a cat burglar and not a very good one. He was thrown out of my mother's house because he wouldn't do any work. I was brought up ultimately by my grandmother, a nice old lady who forced me to read *Jane Eyre* at the age of five. I absolutely hated school. Everybody seemed a bit dim.

He pauses momentarily. I quickly ask him what he is. "Why, I'm 37." "No," I say, "What is your métier?" "My mental age?" Métier, métier. What are you? What do you call yourself?

He looks genuinely perplexed. "I don't really know myself that well. I know others perceive me as a trouble-maker, an irresponsible lunatic, charming at times but terrifying at others.

"It's a thrill in a way because I'm very black, very anonymous in some respects. I'm not seen very easily. People don't know. 'Where is he on this record? His name is there. Where is he? What has he done? He hasn't done anything. He's a complete con-man.' It's like being a magician. You're the guy making the potion. The only thing you see are the effects of it on others. That's what my records are about.

"I'm a bit like Pan. I make mischief with music. I think all those people who make nice things are boring anyway. . . ."

Now engaged in daubing his pink face with moisturizer, his eyes light up. "I'm much more interested in the devil. I think he's a good guy. He's more truthful. The devil is about change, he's about doing things differently for the sheer hell of it."

When I ask him about rock critics, he keeps the same amused, detached tone.

"They're jealous of me and hate me at the same time—because I make it look easy. I don't let them think it's a brilliant occupation and a fabulous job. They always hated me because I never allowed them to take the Sex Pistols seriously.

The Sex Pistols heralded an age of wizard producers, clothing allowances and video

heroes. As McLaren says, "The record industry has learned to put the cork on any subversive intention, package it nicely, and send it on its merry way." He is largely to blame for this situation, and he knows it.

"With the invention of the Sex Pistols, the record industry suddenly realized that here was a guy doing this who was not a hairdresser but almost a hairdresser. In fact, I was a fashion designer and boutique owner. They didn't realize that my boutique was an absolutely nauseating empire of lunatics and rubber duck people. 'What's this got to do with music?' brayed the industry. The group can't even play! And he doesn't seem to care! And look at them! How vile!"

"But suddenly they saw it all working. 'Now, how come?' they thought. 'This guy is a con-man. No . . . yeah . . . but . . . But look, all these kids are into it! And it seems to be about . . . style. He's created this new attitude where style and the presentation of the group is more important than what the group can actually play.'"

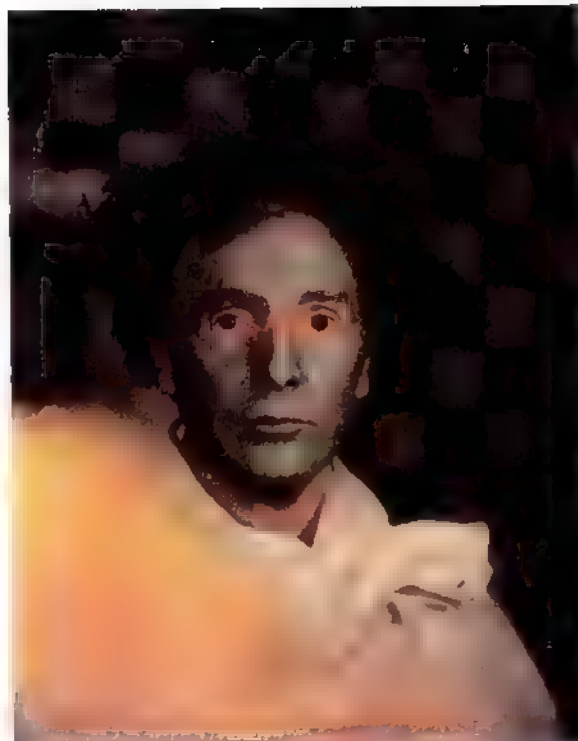
Staring into his closet forlornly, actually silent in consternation, McLaren extracts a pair of rust-colored plus-fours and puts them on. He still has a slightly lost look. A man has arrived to escort him to lunch. As Malcolm isn't completely sure what time or day it is, or just where he is supposed to be going, this man might come in handy. The man's gruff manner and efficient air make McLaren appear even younger—y younger, that is, than ten. I suddenly remember: "There are artists and then there are grown-ups." Jean Cocteau said that.

—Fayette Hickox

Flashes

Look out for the Armoury Show who release a single here in April. Fronted by Richard Jobson, they used to be The Skids until some of the band members left to form Big Country.

Grace Jones has recorded a song with ubiquitous London-based producer Trevor Horn. Island records in England is distinctly cagey about this project, but one very reliable earwitness claims that it sounds like an early '70s rock number sung by Janis Joplin.



Malcolm McLaren: Carmen chameleon

Devo has teamed up with New York's rising young DJ-producer Ivan Ivan to do a remix of the "Here To Go" track from their album *Shout*. The cut will be released as a maxi-single on March 13th with "Shout" on the flip side. The album's first single "Are You Experienced" suffered because their record company released Hendrix's original version at the same time and the video of old Hendrix footage received more airplay on MTV.

The Cars' left-handed guitarist Elliot Easton goes solo for the first time with his album *Change No Change*. The single is "Wearing Down Like a Wheel." Easton, a founding member of the Cars, co-wrote and co-produced with Jules Shear.



Joseph Stevens

Happy Birthday, Lou Reed, 43 on March 2nd, we never thought you would make it. Fans can celebrate Verve/Polydor's re-releasing the first three Velvet Underground albums with their original artwork. The first, *The Velvet Underground and Nico* (1967), features the famous Warhol banana sieve and classic tracks such as "Venus in Furs." *White Light/White Heat* (1968) hears Reed expound the delights of amphetamine on the title track, and the third, *The Velvet Underground* (1969), marks the departure of bassist John Cale, replaced at the time by Doug Yule. And if that's not enough, *Up-Tight: The Velvet Underground Story*, by Victor Bockris and Gerard Malanga (William Morrow, \$7.95), hits book stores this month. For a review of the Velvet's "lost album," released 15 years after the tracks were recorded, see **SPINS**.

After a two-year hiatus, Dexy's Midnight Runners returns to the music scene this April with a new album, *Don't Stand Me Down*. In case anyone had forgotten them already, the Runners' most recent success was the 1983 LP *Too-Rye-Ay*, a collection of folk-tinged soul songs which spawned the hit "Come On Eileen." Their six-year-old career has seen more costume changes than records.

Da BoDeans

WAUKESHA, Wisconsin—Waukesha is sometimes a fierce town. It is a string of foundries ringed by subdivisions of neatly trimmed lawns about 20 miles west of Milwaukee. The well-off and the downtrodden meet at the newly refurbished downtown where the centerpoint is a small fountain underneath a brick gazebo. This town of 50,000 is the birthplace of the legendary Les Paul—dubbed the “Wizard of Waukesha” 30 years ago—but nothing indicates Paul lived there. It’s that kind of town.

“There’s not much going on,” concedes Curt Newman, lead guitarist for Da BoDeans, Waukesha’s best rock ‘n’ roll export since Paul. “I see a lot of people hating their lives.”

“My father worked in the foundry,” says Sam Llanis, a second-generation Mexican-American who sings haunting lead on many of Da BoDeans songs. “He and my grandfather accepted that as success. But I went down there and I saw it. I can’t accept that. I want more than that.”

It’s hard not to rave about the trio—Llanis and Newman on guitars and Guy Hoffman on drums. A live show brings chills. The trio moves electrically to their exciting, crashing sounds, jumping off-stage to wind their way through the dancing crowd which sings along. The absence of a bass and the Buddy Holly-style “slap echo” on their voices give their live shows a distinct quality.

They have the ability to “light the match and start the place on fire,” says a fellow musician. Their music comprises 35 originals mixed with Elvis’s “Moss of Blues,” “Heartbreak Hotel” and “Mean Woman Blues”; Springsteen’s “Fire” and “I’m on Fire”; T-Bone Burnett’s “When the Night Falls” and a powerful version of Neil Diamond’s “Thank the Lord for Night Time.” Entranced audiences leave pitchers of beer idle at the tables—in Milwaukee there is no higher compliment. “We want to have fun and hope the people can take some inspiration,” says Newman, a blue-eyed urban heartthrob in the Timothy Hutton mold. “We’re just doing what we want to do.”

Llanis and Newman write two-minute wonders—songs which manage to marry the raw power of the early Stones

with Everly Brothers-style harmonies. Sometimes they will create two or three songs a week. “We need a lot of them because they’re so short,” Llanis laughs.

In performance it’s often Llanis who lights the match with a voice that is part Hank Williams, part Smokey Robinson. He grew up with a mishmash of musical sounds. His Texas-born father was a bass player in a Mexican band that played some of the slow “weepers” now favored by Los Lobos. “There were always guitars and accordions around the house,” Llanis recalls. “When I heard some of Los Lobos’ songs, I just immediately knew them.”

Llanis also grew to love Hank Williams and Johnny Cash and the late ‘60s Top 40 radio, which he sang along to in his bedroom. “I would turn the radio up as loud as it would go so no one would hear me. I wasn’t really aware that I had an unusual voice until I got up and sang with a band. But it just seemed so natural to be up there. Now everybody tells me what a great voice I have. I really can’t tell.”

Newman is the white-bread counterpart to Llanis. His bandanas, jeans and Telecaster guitar are reminiscent of one of his idols, Bruce Springsteen, as are his naive, funny raps that bridge into choruses. Both Newman and Llanis have been in bands since high school and have found a chemistry that makes them seem like brothers. “I can’t figure it out,” says Newman. “We’re just just conscious of each other so much on stage.”

The confusing name of the band—it’s Da as in “the” and BoDeans was Llanis’s invention, a wry salute to Jethro Bodine, Max Baer Jr.’s role on “The Beverly Hillbillies.” The spelling also connotes James Dean, and “It just looks cool,” Newman admits. The original Da BoDeans was just Llanis and Newman playing guitars and singing in Waukesha bars. But the act lacked punch. Hoffman—a drummer in R&B-based bands in Milwaukee—completed the trio last summer. “He made us a band. Now we know what we want to do,” says Newman.

Onstage the band dresses

down, sometimes actually changing out of better street clothes into more worn ones.

“The music’s the important thing,” says Newman. “I never liked it when bands came on looking better than the audience. We show the crowd we’re just like them.”

Da BoDeans are surprised to have gotten this far in seven months, and they have attracted enough attention to realize that their Waukesha days may be numbered. A Columbia records executive has praised them as “revivalists,” a term band members are a little leery of. “It’s sad in a way if that music has to be revived,” says Llanis, referring to guitar-orientated R&B. “A lot of bands have lost that feeling. But for a lot of people this music has never died.”

—Dan Racine

Yakety Yak

I manage to look so young because I’m mentally retarded.

—Debbie Harry

Roxanne’s Rivals

The word on the streets these days in all kinds of neighborhoods is “Roxanne.” The Brooklyn rap trio UTFO (Untouchable Force) started something with the single “Roxanne, Roxanne” (Select), a good-natured jibe at a girl so stuck up she wouldn’t give their suave selves none, if you catch my drift. Superfly femme Roxanne Shanté (her real name) responded with “Roxanne’s Revenge” (Pop Art) and the original Roxanne, with Untouchable Force behind her, came back with the salacious “The Real Roxanne” (Select). Then rap mistress Sparky D joined the fray with “Sparky’s Turn (Roxanne You’re Through)” on which she warned UTFO’s Miss R that she wasn’t the only fox on the block. In the works by others are “Roxanne’s Father,” “Roxanne’s Brother,” and yet another UTFO rebuttal. Someone tell Websters, “Roxanne” has passed into street talk for women who aren’t giving it up.

—John Leland



Mark McCraw

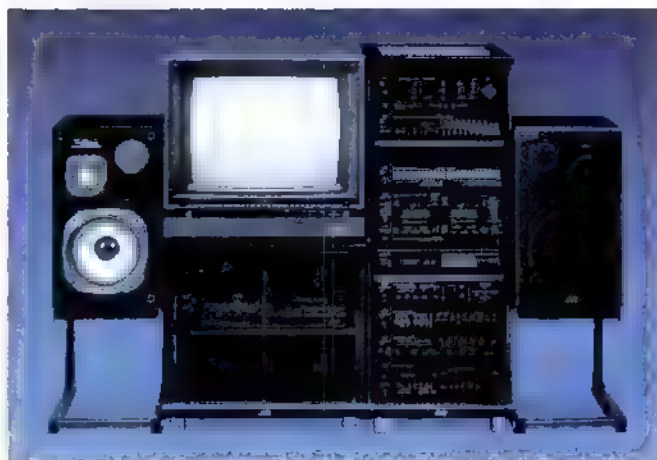
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CROSSMEDIA SERIES



Band Aid II

His Royal Highness, Prince, has penned a song especially for USA for Africa, the rock world's project to raise money for the starving people in Ethiopia. Entitled "Tears In Your Eyes," he wrote it while on the road. It will be included in the double album of unreleased material donated by the various artists involved in the blockbusting charity effort. Kragen and Company, who are coordinating the scheme, have confirmed that Linda Ronstadt also has donated a track—"Keeping Out of Mischief," and are negotiating with others, including Pat Benatar.

The album is set for release this month with the Quincy Jones-produced single "We Are the World." Although no label had been confirmed at the time of going to press, the records will be accompanied by sweatshirts, posters, etc. and Kragen's people are projecting sales figures around the \$150 million mark. USA for Africa was initiated by Harry Belafonte after he heard about Bob Geldof's British Band Aid which has raised over \$8 million with "Do They Know Its Christmas?" After January's American Music Awards the assembled competitors crowded into limousines and rushed to the A&M studios in Los Angeles where they spent the entire night recording the Lionel Richie-Michael Jackson song.

The artists involved are: Harry Belafonte, Dan Aykroyd, Lindsey Buckingham, Kim Carnes, Ray Charles, Bob Dylan, Sheila E, Daryl Hall, James Ingram, The Jacksons, Al Jarreau, Waylon Jennings, Billy Joel, Cyndi Lauper, Huey Lewis and the News, Willie Nelson, Bette Midler, Kenny Loggins, John Oates, Jeffrey Osborne, Steve Perry (from Journey), the Pointer Sisters,

Lionel Richie, Smokey Robinson, Kenny Rogers, Diana Ross, Paul Simon, Bruce Springsteen, Tina Turner, Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick.

Meanwhile, Bob Geldof is presented with the problem of administrating the money he and his allies raised for the famine-stricken people. He flew to Sudan (where refugees are gathering from Ethiopia, Chad and Uganda in search for food) and found that their problems were exacerbated by rivalry between the various charity organizations and bureaucracy. In what was dubbed "punk diplomacy" by the *New York Times*, he is reported to have visited Deputy Governor Suliaman Osman Fagiri, who began to wait on and on about the innumerable setbacks involved in getting assistance to the refugees, thousands of whom are dying every day. Geldof, not known for his patience, began drumming on the table with his fingers and humming one of his latest tunes. Finally, unable to contain himself any longer, he pointed a finger at Fagiri's chest and said, "It's really very simple, Governor. When people are hungry they die. So spare me your politics and tell me what you need and how you're going to get it to these people."

Flash heartily endorses punk diplomacy. The world needs more of it.

Flashes

Another commendable act leaps on the Band Aid wagon. Two-Tone mastermind Jerry Dammers, aided by General Public, members of Madness and UB40, will release a rearranged version of the Pioneers' 1969 reggae number "Starvation." Pioneer Jackie Robinson sings vocals on the single and all proceeds will go to the Ethiopian refugees.

SO WHAT

Duran Duran and Michael Jackson will not be gracing any *Purple Rain* sequels. The former has turned down an offer by *Purple* director Al Magnoli because they are interested in their own production—an 80-minute rock effort called *Arena*. Meanwhile the swivel-hipped thriller is reading film scripts but also wants to avoid the Prince cliché. "And don't even suggest Peter Pan," warns one of his innumerable spokesmen. "He is looking for a more serious thing to show his acting ability."

Said **Bob Dylan** recently, "I don't call myself a poet because I don't like the word. I'm a trapeze artist."

Rob Lowe, teen-idol extraordinaire: "I hate the label 'teen idol.' As far as the teen magazine interviews are concerned, they run excerpts from other interviews. I refuse to talk to them. Their writing is so bad and half the time the facts are distorted." Sixteen lucky girls recently spent the evening with Rob as winner of an MGM competition, *Win a Date with Rob Lowe*.

Are **Cyndi Lauper** and **Mr. T** more than just good friends? Do girls really want to have that much fun? If discretion is the better part of valor, credit them for trying to leave a busy, trendy L.A. bistro without being spotted by the resident paparazzi. In a last-ditch, vainglorious attempt to preserve anonymity, gargantuan Mr. T and blazing, technicolored Miss L shielded their faces as they rushed away.

Matt Dillon: *I was born with this face. I don't think there is anything special about it. I don't understand what people see in me.*

Eddie Van Halen: *No one lasts forever. I mean there's nothing wrong with walking around acting like you're God—but you're only going to be God for a year.*

Dee Snider's real name is Daniel.

A selection from *The Michael Jackson Catalog*:

A Michael Jackson look-alike contest on May 2, 1984 at Parkdale Mall in Beaumont, Texas was cancelled when more than 6000 contestants showed up. Only 500 had been expected. The contest, sponsored by radio station KHYS, was rescheduled for a later date—in a football stadium. Jackson look-alike contests can be dangerous. At a recent event fans tried to put one contestant on fire to emulate Michael's accident during the shooting of the recent Pepsi commercial.

If anyone could find one of the prototypes of the original **Michael Jackson doll** with the glove and mike on the wrong hand, it would be considered a prime collectible, since that doll is not, and never will be, on the market.

1977 to 1980: On the TV special *Diana (1980)* viewers saw Michael's soft-spoken charm as he bantered with Miss Ross. During this era Michael made his movie debut in *The Wiz*, recorded *Off the Wall*, became interested in vegetarianism, and had plastic surgery on his nose. It was the beginning of a physical transformation that gave us the Michael of 1984. **1981 to the present:** Michael loses weight, changes his hairstyle and becomes almost ethereal looking. "Peter Pan" is the term most used to describe him. The 1984 Michael dons dark glasses to avoid eye contact and begins to wear military type jackets, like a hip Sergeant Pepper... Prices on 1983 memorabilia doubled in one year.

No Leather—Michael dislikes wearing clothing made of leather because of his vegetarian beliefs, although he has occasionally bent his rule. He wore a leather outfit in the video for "Billie Jean" and has posed in leather jackets in some posters, but does not wear leather in his everyday dress.

So what.



So What of the Month

The Stranglers' sleeve notes for their new album, *Aural Sculpture*, read:

When those of us who are committed to the creation of *Aural Sculpture* can no longer sit and tolerate the prostitution of sound that is proliferating around us, it is time to speak out.

The musicians of our times are harlots and charlatans, who use science without being scientists and abuse art without being artists. We are witnessing the demise of music. So be it.

The world must prepare itself to herald the advent of *Aural Sculpture*, whose presence can now be shared with the fortunate few who have the ears to hear, the vision to see, and the intelligence to comprehend.

Wait. Wait. I feel something stirring, are we witnessing the birth of a sculpture? Within the confines of the concentric grooves, an immaculate conception is about to take place. Listen. Can you hear? The catharsis of the birth is almost too much to bear. It is emerging, its glistening form, its voluptuous curves. Harken to the ecstatic crescendos of the newly born spreading to fill the vacuum of your pathetic little life. Oh the bliss, Oh the pleasure caressing your ears. How can you have survived until this historic moment? How could the world have continued to mark time whilst writhing in ignorance as to the future of the aging creature known as music? Behold. Behold. The Stranglers bring you *Aural Sculpture*.



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U2

Bono Vox writes songs that are politically daring, intelligent and risky—like the man himself. A conversation about God, leather pants, *Blade Runner*, war, makeup, Catholics and music as sweet as sex.

Interview by Jeff Spurrier



Kevin Tisdale/SIPA/Special Features

SPIN: Once again your tour is going to be a long one. Why do you endure such long bouts on the road?

BONO: Well, we feel that at this stage we're open to misunderstanding or misinterpretation, and it's important to actually be there for inspection. Do you know what I mean? Often people will have images of you, and the best way to shatter those preconceptions is to show them. We are essentially a rock'n'roll band, be it a 1985 version. We are flesh and blood. We're human beings. We sweat. We're not hiding behind our haircuts. And being on stage is where we are at home. For a lot of our contemporaries that isn't the case, and we felt it was important to show people that and allow them to make up their own minds about U2.

SPIN: You once remarked that "there are no masks for U2, no pretense."

BONO: Yeah, I was trying to say that sometimes people in the press can get a real grasp of what we're doing, while others just get a glimpse and then just build on it with their imagination. Some people expect U2 to come on like a political band, using the stage as a soapbox—that we're going to ram Northern Ireland down their throats. Other people see us as prophets. Some see us as pop stars and think we're going to come on in tight leather pants and makeup. And we're not any of those things. We're probably all of them. I don't know what we are.

SPIN: Do you think the political band tag came about as a result of War?

BONO: Yeah, we thought putting a child's face on the cover would be a foil for all that, that people would realize that we're talking about much more than just war on a political level. But it may be because of so much radio play for "Sunday, Bloody Sunday." Even "New Year's Day" has a bite because of the documentary

footage in the video of Lech Walesa and the Solidarity people. And a lot of people didn't see the humor in "Seconds," and they thought it was a very dour song. They didn't see the black humor. Actually now that I think of it, we do ram Northern Ireland down their throats sometimes, but it's not our intention. Our intention is to just have our music reflect what is going on in our lives as truthfully and honestly as we can.

SPIN: The band seems much more concerned with spiritual rather than religious themes.

BONO: Religion has torn our country in two. I'm not into religion at all. In the song "Sunday, Bloody Sunday" we contrasted the event—a recent shooting of 13 people, it doesn't even matter by whom, and an event in 1914 when this group of British thugs called the Black and Tans shot up a group of people at a football match. It was a day that the Irish won't forget—though they probably should. I was just trying to contrast the farcical side of the struggle between Protestants and Catholics with what was at the root of that—the root of both beliefs—I contrasted that with Easter Sunday. I thought that would turn it all upside down. I just wish people would keep it all properly balanced.

SPIN: It's hard to do, though, because politics and music just automatically give one something to focus on.

BONO: Yes, I know. It's everyone's favorite subject, isn't it? It's not mine. What made it worse in our own country is we became friendly with the Prime Minister of Ireland, Dr. Fitzgerald. He visited the studio, and people really thought we were freaking out. But all that happened was that we met him on a plane and had an argument with him, and both sides enjoyed the argument so much that we set a date for another argument. And we've

been arguing ever since. He's a lovely man.

SPIN: You're very much an Irish band . . .

BONO: Yes, thank you.

SPIN: Why do you think that Irish bands have such an obviously different identity from bands in England?

BONO: I don't know what it is about being Irish. There's a sort of survival instinct, because for so long our country was on the very brink of survival—having been through a famine and various oppressors—so people tend to hold onto their identity more. But also I think it's the fact that in Ireland we're less susceptible to fashion as a force. I've nothing against style. But fashion as an industry force; for instance, in London people are very, very aware of the sort of hat they're wearing. It's got to be the right shape and the right color for this month. Right? And that comes down through magazines, and advertising, and whatever. So that groups that go there tend to lose their identity in this London identity. And most groups in England always go to London and lose that particular quality they once had. We refused to go to London. I love the city, but we felt that Dublin was a retreat, a place where we had an anchor. The same thing happened in Liverpool recently, where a whole group of bands developed that also refused to move to London, and they had an identity like our own.

As I said, I've nothing against clothes and style. It's good for people to express themselves. Also I've nothing against machines and synthesizers. It's the machines that use the machines that I worry about.

SPIN: Do you think they're too cold and unemotional?

BONO: There's a group called Yazoo that uses machines in a very obvious way—sequencers. And yet the voice of the singer has more soul to it than all of their



Kees Ikkav/SIPA/Special Features

contemporaries in that style. It's emotions that come across. One of the groups that I grew up on was Kraftwerk. There was a degree of pathos in their music. It wasn't pop music, or as John Lennon called it, "wallpaper music." There was something more to it.

SPIN: Some sort of soul?

BONO: Maybe. It wasn't even in the guy's voice. There was just a sense of communication. I always want an outstretched hand in music.

SPIN: That's sort of the opposite from the alienated tone of so much synth music today.

BONO: Yeah, I think that's because a lot of people honestly just don't have anything to say and yet they say it all the time! It's just clouded in imagery and certain buzz words that, if evoked enough times, spark off emotions in the listener. People are just pressing these buttons all the time. It's not the medium of synthesizers—it's how it's used. Like anything. Bass, guitars, drums. They're just pieces of wood, metal, and plastic. It's how you use them that counts. The Edge is not the sort of musician who takes his guitar to bed with him. He uses it to get across what he wants.

SPIN: When you're writing a song, are you pretty much aware of a theme that you want to cover?

BONO: It depends. We try to throw any rules out the window. An image I've mentioned before is that of a sculptor

working on a piece of stone. It's like there are four of us chipping away, and finally it emerges. Some songs like "I Will Follow" come out quickly, whereas a song like "New Year's Day" was much more structured. The music was written, and then I improvised melodically and lyrically over it.

SPIN: You improvised lyrically while recording?

BONO: Yeah. It's a process we've used before and probably will use again.

SPIN: Isn't that sort of risky? What if nothing comes?

BONO: Well, that has happened. There are tracks lying in studios in Dublin that are just music and no vocals. For me, at one stage, that was the only way I could work.

SPIN: Why?

BONO: Well, when we first began, with *Boy*, I used to write a lot of the lyrics onstage. I would have a theme, a song title, and a few lines. If we listen to tapes of our early concerts, the lyrics were changing every night.

SPIN: It sounds almost like improvised poetry.

BONO: Well, maybe it is a particularly Irish thing to do. I was aware of the work of Joyce and Yeats. And even the music would change from night to night. Someone can just play one note at a sound check—there was one song, written in Holland, that came like that. This roadie handed The Edge a guitar that was sup-

posed to be in tune, but was actually in a different tuning than usual even though it was still harmonious. Edge struck the guitar. Once, I just immediately stopped the band and asked Larry to play a beat, and we just went into it. The tape recorder was rolling, and five minutes later there was a song with verse, chorus, lyrics, theme—everything. It was called "Be There." Our manager just freaked.

That's just the way we've worked from stage sometimes. On our second LP I had prepared lyrics, but I lost the lyrics while on tour in Seattle, and so I developed a process of working in the studio, which was very nerve-racking, as you can imagine. Our producer used to leave the studio totally drained, but he said, "Don't stop. I've never seen it before, but it works for you." That's why we didn't put any lyrics on the *October* cover or the inside sleeve—because there were never any written down. I love the music of words, the rush of words. I love to see them bounce together. In "The Electric Company" on *Boy*—the song is all about electroshock therapy—I rushed the words really fast. It would have been wrong to put them down. They were so much a part of the drum beat.

SPIN: They existed only as part of the song then?

BONO: Yeah, that's right. I only put four songs' lyrics on *Boy* for that reason. The lyrics of "New Year's Day" didn't really make sense for us until two months after

the song was written. I had this theme of making a New Year's resolution, but things remaining the same, and then we heard that in Poland martial law was lifted on New Year's Day, but things still stayed the same.

SPIN: You think that music is too intellectual sometimes?

BONO: Yeah. Music can be intelligent without being intellectual. I think it's important to keep things in perspective. Rock 'n' roll in its birth in this country was not about musicianship. It was about a feeling. Jerry Lee Lewis didn't fully know what he was doing. It was a very emotional thing. If music gets too cerebral, it misses something. I think there's a balance. Music should be made for the head, the heart, and the feet. And when it's got those three, it's got it all. I sometimes worry that something is getting lost.

SPIN: You've been called "a band of romantics." Do you think that's true?

BONO: That's interesting because I think *Boy* was a truly romantic record, not in the sense of sex, but in the true sense of the word. I feel great music has the potential to both capture the time in which it was made and to go beyond it. Also film, advertising, photographs—the timing is essential. *Boy*'s timing was right. I feel it captured a time, a certain mood that was in the air. Just after we finished it we came to London and I saw *The Tin Drum*. To see the child in the movie and then the child on our cover, we knew that

something was happening. And the movie *Tess* had these emotions and these scenes that were somehow the same feeling as our album. Like Roxy Music's *Avalon* album. There was a sense of correct timing about it as well. The movie *Excalibur* was out, and it just felt right. *Tess* was a romantic movie and *Boy* was a romantic album in the true sense.

SPIN: What about *War*? Is that also an album of its time?

BONO: Yeah, although actually I think it's maybe one step ahead of its time. When this album was received by journalists in London they got a real shock, because the U2 sound was thrown out the window for the most part. The sound was stripped down, and it was a little difficult to get used to. Sounds in England had been very plush with ABC and others. Our LP was a bit of a culture shock.



Kevin Tabor/SIPA/Special Features

we're going to film. I have to go back there. We're planning to use the area for some of our next films. I'm also getting interested in videos that don't necessarily document the song, but are as important as the song. They're like separate parts. The band might not even be in them. They might just be like a film being background to music rather than the other way around. We're going to do demos on cheap movie equipment. I'm also going to be working while we're there. I'd like some of the next LP to be written there, on location. It may not make any sense. Movies have a real impact on me. I'm a real sucker. I probably take myself too seriously, and probably movies and music as well. I plead guilty. I saw *Blade Runner*...

SPIN: What did you think of it?

BONO: I loved the visuals, but I didn't like all the tongue-in-cheek dialogue that Harrison Ford had. I think that movies today are a bit too cynical. For instance they've made a remake of *Breathless*—which was a great film. And when Godard was making the original, he wasn't working in any genre. He was just making a film. I didn't like *Blade Runner* that much, and the soundtrack was all wrong. It was Vangelis whom I love normally. He's got a real emotion to his music. But during the film I could tell it was wrong. The music that people will be playing in their cities in the 1990s, in an electronic age, won't be electronic music. It'll be totally naturalist, probably acoustic—Irish music, Cajun music, black music, reggae music, blues. That'll be the music on the college campuses, because it'll remind us of something we've lost. I've gotten

Left: The Edge. Right: The Edge and Adam Clayton.

real interested in ethnic sounds, which is why I love King Sunny Ade and guitar players like Ebenezer Obey. The Edge is totally amazed at these African players, because they all play out of time—most peculiar time sequences.

Anyway, I hope that on this trip along the Northern Irish coast those rocks and the whole harshness of the area will do something. I'm not camping out for inspiration, to find the muse. It's just that I feel it will keep a certain part of our music in context. Give it a richness. I haven't told anyone else about this except the band.

SPIN: I was talking to The Edge about music and spirituality, and I would like to know if you see any relation between the old concept of religion and modern music?

BONO: That's an interesting question—



Leo Houn

because I do. I think all singers, when they're dragging things out of themselves that they didn't know were there, become very aware of their spirit—the third part of their being. Music is one of the few areas in life where we can sort of express ourselves. We can actually scream or break something. For me it's been a release, while my belief in God is so personal that I just shut my mouth all the time lest I trash it into the ground because I feel so awkward trying to express it. That's what the song "Gloria" is about—the failure to express that belief. It says, "I try to stand up, but I can't find my feet, I try to speak up, but only in you am I complete." It resorts to Latin even, because I cannot explain. I think that failure to express our emotions puts the effort into making great music. That's why John Lennon made great music all the time. He was trying to cut through hypocrisy and find out who he was. I think it's what separates music. There's no division between old music and new music. The division is between great music and not-great music. For me it's also important if people will give of themselves to the music, because I think the truth is like a sword—it really cuts through. You can tell if that singer onstage is adopting a stance or if it is himself that is on the line.

SPIN: Is music purifying?

BONO: For me, yes. I don't think I could do anything else. I don't think I'm capable of doing anything else. Rock 'n' roll has always been a release for me. That's what it should be. It's a purging thing. And wherever we've been on tour, people in the audience really love the group, they really do. It's an incredible warmth that's coming off. We're a live band, an aggressive band.

And now some of those journalists who had written us off are saying it's their favorite LP. I think that shows the importance of being out of London.

SPIN: Have you ever felt the desire to move there?

BONO: Well, it is a center of music just like New York or L.A. And we probably could move there now because our identity is strong enough, but I don't really want to. I might move there for a few months, just like I might move to New York for a few months. I'm getting very interested in the effect that environments and locations have on our music. "Two Hearts Beat as One," "Surrender," "Red-Line"—all these songs were radically affected by New York and the time we spent there. I'm waiting to see what effect this tour will have on our music.

I've put down four areas where I'm interested in recording, and one of them is Tokyo. I want to go outside Tokyo, because I believe you get more of an impression of what's really going on outside of the cities. Another one is Berlin, because it's so tense—like Northern Ireland. New York is the third. And the fourth is the area that myself and my wife, Allie, go to. It's in Northern Ireland. First we go to the west of Ireland and then trace right along the head of Northern Ireland's coast and cross to Scotland and trace along the head of northern Scotland, the Hebrides. Yeats called it "a terrible beauty." And it is. We're taking cameras up there and



Kevin Tabor/SIPA/Special Features

Above and left page: Bono Vox. "We are a rock 'n' roll band. We are flesh and blood. We are human."



Laura Levine

LONG AND WINDING ROAD

The Fuegos and the Replacements were the wildest, loudest, drunkest bar bands in their home towns. Now the wonderful sub-slime hope to be sublime . . . but in different ways.

Article by Chuck Reece

Paul Westerberg, the lead singer, songwriter, and de facto leader of the Replacements—four bad boys from Minneapolis—hates like hell to admit his deep concern for the band's future, but he can't hide it. He and I are walking down the front hallway of the 688 Club in Atlanta about three hours before showtime when he sees Bob Stinson, the band's addled but affable lead guitarist, involved in what looks like a shady deal with a stranger.

"No, Bob," he says sternly under his breath. "No!"

Westerberg wants the show to cook tonight. He'd rather spare Atlanta, a town that has been pretty good to his band, one of those patented Replacements debacles that once provoked a critic to call them "almost invariably awful live."

The Del Fuegos, from Boston, are sitting in the dressing room of the Mohawk Club in the faceless Boston suburb of Shirley, quietly watching a barhop toting in a complimentary case of Molson Ale. In the corner, drummer Woody Ceissman draws sheep on the wall with a black marker. The four Fuegos eye the case of Molson. They swap glances. They know what must be done.

"Uh, could we trade that in?" bassist Tom Lloyd asks the barhop.

"What do you want?"

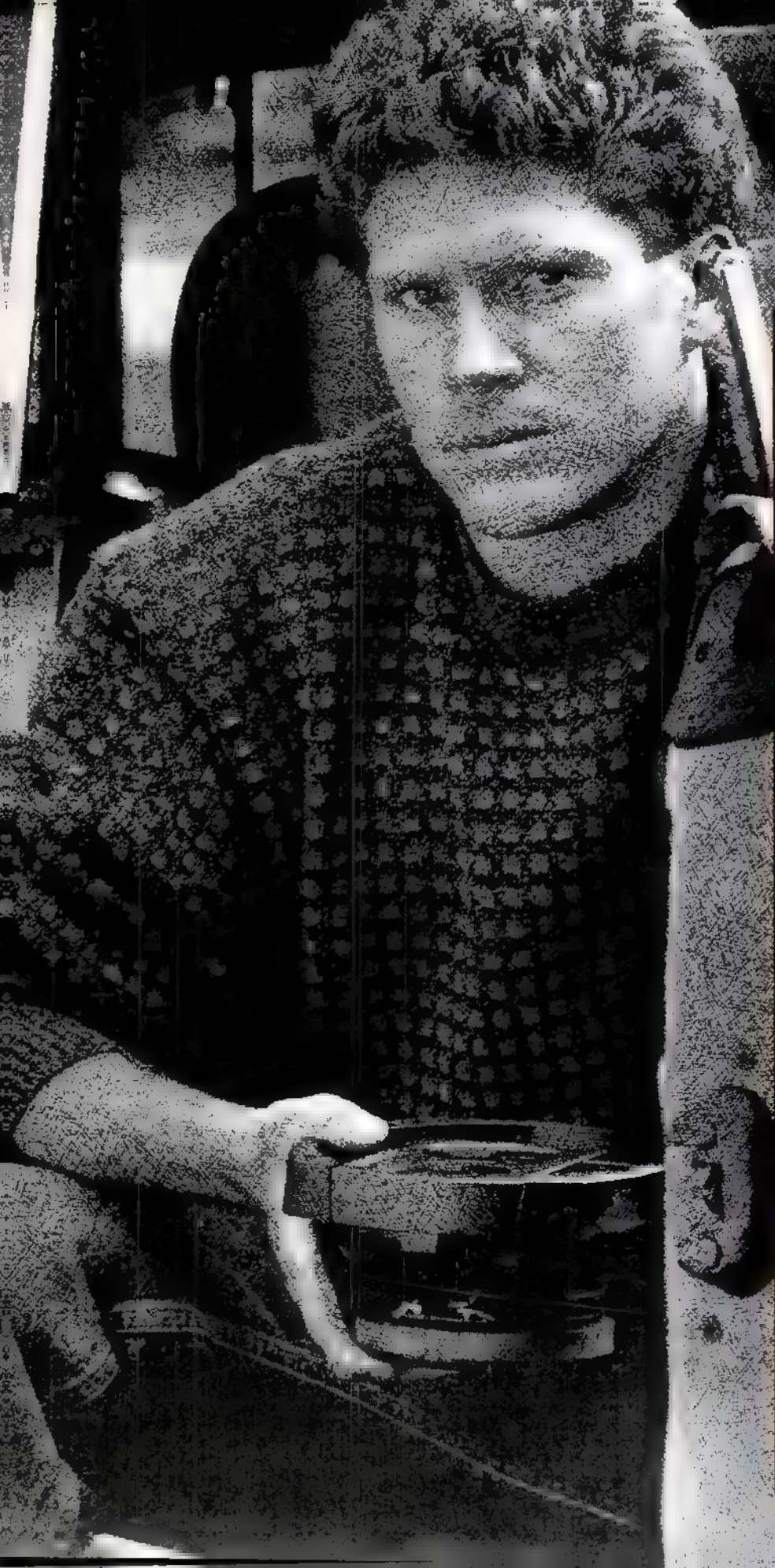
"We'd rather have Budweiser, really."

The Del Fuegos play American, and they drink American. But their Boston buddies, who once could count on the Fuegos to join in a drinking contest, don't find them such ready partners in wretched excess anymore.

This, then, is the tale of two young American bands heading toward the same goal on very different paths. The Replacements sometimes appear onstage crooked and spend two hours trying to play a set of heavy-metal covers, without finishing a single song. On one tour, the Del Fuegos spent as much money on booze as they did on gasoline. Today, with the Del Fuegos writing songs for their second album, and the Replacements having just signed with Sire Records, both are getting straighter.

On a good night, each can muster the absolute best that pop music has to offer. Now, they must decide how to reach a wider audience than the punk underground. And, ain't it funny, they're discovering that making such decisions requires a clear head.

The Del Fuegos have transformed their raw abandon into something leaner and meaner, rooted in rhythm and blues. Mixing a little country and a little metal with a lot of rock 'n' roll, the Replacements, who were thrown together in guitarist Bob Stinson's basement, still operate as they always have, running willy-



I didn't buy my car stereo backwards.

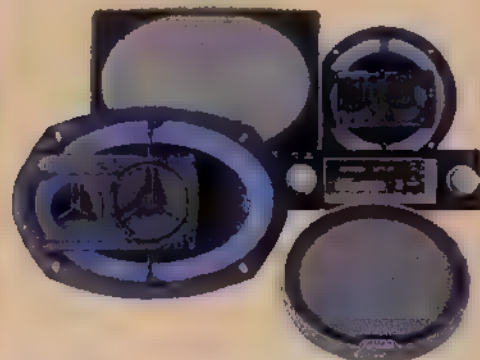
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From Jank

nilly at the castle doors. If they break through—magic! If not, well, back to Bob's basement.

The opinion that the Replacements are awful live is dead wrong. When Westerberg, Stinson, Stinson's brother, bassist Tommy, and drummer Chris Mars manage to tumble together into a good groove, the Replacements can raise a crowd straight into ecstasy.

"Usually it's spontaneous," Westerberg says. "It just happens onstage. Usually, when we try to plan the next move that'll work, it just doesn't fly. It's best when it happens by accident, because that's when it's the most fun. It's exciting for us. You've got nothing to lose, and it could go over big or everything could just crumble, right? You shoot for something, and if it doesn't make it, well. . . ."

Well, you go down together. The Replacements' magic and their mishaps are predicated on the volatile friendship among Westerberg, Mars and the Stinsons.

"The playing—doing the songs, worrying about who's gonna catch on to it and how big and what's gonna happen next, that stuff—it's scary, and we just don't want to think about it," Westerberg says. "We don't do all that because we'd probably flip out. I think we've got the right attitude. Probably not the most professional attitude, and probably not the one that's gonna take us as far as we

possibly could go, but it's probably the one that's gonna keep us together the longest.

"That strong feeling is what binds us together. Like, if one guy can't cut it, and you know you're hot that night, just the fact that he's going down—well, then I'm going down with him. It's a bond. It's something you can't get anywhere else. It's a real good feeling, even when you go down."

Deliverance and laughs—with a dark twinkle in the eye—are what you get from the Replacements—if you're lucky. They mix brazen hilarity and pointed confession so effectively that you become immersed in their pain, but come up laughing. Last winter's *Let It Be* album, a critical success and college-radio favorite, is the best showcase yet for the band's trashy sound and commonplace wisdom. "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out," is an account of the 18-year-old bassist's operation, from the doctor's point of view. "Let's get this over with/I'll be home in an hour/My Cadillac's running/Rip, rip! Gonna rip 'em out now!" Then turn the album over and listen to "Answering Machine," a lament over blocked communication between lovers: "Can't reach her heart, only her answering machine." Over a churning and slashing guitar riff, he wails darkly, "How do you say I'm lonely to an answering machine?/How do you say I love you to an answering machine?/Ooooh, I hate your answering machine." Emotions

like that weigh heavy on the Replacements, making it hard for the band to be just smiling entertainers.

"I say a lot more in a song than I do to the band," Westerberg admits. "We're close and all, but we don't sit around and talk about deep feelings or anything. It's difficult to show them a song—the lyrics are like me talking to them, which is something I never do. That's why it's difficult sometimes to have people cheering and shit when I'm doing 'Answering Machine.' There ain't no way I could be happy and smiling when I'm doing that. It's a whirlwind of different feelings."

Westerberg writes good hooks; his band could have hits. Westerberg wants to write more soul-blaring and humorous tunes and produce records that are more sophisticated than the Replacements' first four discs on an independent Minneapolis label. But the message is in his every word: they are always the Replacements. They could run headlong at 90 mph into the brick wall of the Big Record Business and explode.

"Then again," Westerberg asks with a grin, "would you like to see us turn to stone and crumble? If we go, we're gonna go down in flames. Then we'll come back with, like, suits and chick singers. . . ."

The Del Fuegos left Boston for Los Angeles for three months last summer to record its first album. When they came back, Beantowners were shocked. Their

Previous page: the Replacements
Above: the Del Fuegos

act had been cleaned up. And, God forbid, they seemed to be liking it.

"Here in Boston," Zanes says one afternoon in the Fuegos' South End rehearsal space, "people don't give a shit if you're out of tune. They actually encourage that, I think, because then they know you'll play at Chet's (a tiny Beantown dive) your whole life. They can go see you every Saturday night. People definitely like to hold you down, so that you're all theirs. They don't have to share you with the rest of the country."

But Zanes, like the soul singers he claims are his deepest influences, is evangelical enough about his messages to want a wide audience. Help had come from Mitchell Froom, an L.A. session genius with R&B roots and producer of the Fuegos' soulful little dish of hellfire, *The Longest Day*.

"Mitchell should be fucking crowned for what he did," says Warren (Ork Boy) Zanes, Dan's brother and the Fuegos' 19-year-old lead-guitar whiz. What Mitchell did was show the Fuegos a secret about soul music: that it's better to sting a little than to bludgeon to death.

"Music like theirs, reaches its peak when it's played with ultra-simplicity," says Froom. "It wasn't a matter of cleaning up their act; it was getting them to

continued on p.73

RAP 'N' ROLL

I'm Run of Run-D.M.C.,
Like Kool, of Kool and the Gang
I'm one def rapper
I know I can hang

I'm D.M.C. of the place to be
I used to go to St. John's Univer-
sity
I'm lightskinned from Hollis
Queens
Love eating chicken and collard
greens

Jam Master Jay is the big beat
blaster
Gets better because he knows he
has to'
In '85 he'll be a little faster
Because only practice makes a
real jammaster

Run goes to school everyday
Jay spans the records he has to
play
And we get down with no delay

Article by Edward Rasen

Run, D.M.C., and Jam Master Jay are "def," as in "definitely," as in "definitely hip," as per the unofficial dictionary of hip hop slang. Moreover, they are the first superstars of rap music. The group's debut album, *Run-D.M.C.* on Profile Records, is the first rap music album awarded a gold record—an award for certified sales of 500,000 copies. Their new album, *King of Rock*, almost sold gold on its initial release. The video for their song "Rockbox" appears on MTV, an unusual occurrence for most black groups, let alone rappers.

Run (Joseph Simmons) and D.M.C. (Darryl McDaniels) are "rappers," emcees who talk in rhymes with and over the instrumental breaks on records which are "scratched" by Jam Master Jay (Jay Mizell), a scratch disc-jockey who in live performances is a one-man band for the group.



From Jonik

Rap's roots are in the "toastlers" of Jamaica, who used to talk over instrumental music. The genre remained exclusive to reggae until the late '70s, when DJs at New York City dance clubs began mixing and repeating instrumental breaks from records and rapping to encourage the dancers.

"The difference between those days and now is that back then there weren't any rap records," says Run, who began his professional career in 1977 as "The Son of Kurtis Blow" (one of the first American rappers). "We'd just rap over anything with a hard beat such as Aerosmith and James Brown, or breaks in songs like Billy Squier's 'Beat Box.'"

For those of you who live under a rock, rapping and scratching are closely aligned with "breaking," as in breakdancing, which evolves from the dance warfare used to settle feuds between street gangs from the South Bronx area of New York City. Rapping, scratching, breaking, and graffiti art—popularized by street artists in New York City who deface subway cars—are the main ingredients of hip hop.

Some geniuses in the music business still consider hip hop a fad, but the movement continues its inexorable invasion of middle America. Professional dancers break and lock on network television shows and commercials, while amateurs perform stylized variations at their neighborhood dance clubs, or on the original stage, the sidewalk. The dynamic, improvisational music featuring loopy limericks and slang dialect has even infiltrated mainstream rock radio stations. Mr. T and Rodney Dangerfield have each released rap albums. That just about constitutes an arrival in middle America.

Ironically, the most listened-to rap comes not from members of a South Bronx street gang but from three young men, not yet 20 years old, who live with their parents in the Hollis section of Queens, a predominantly prim-and-proper black area just across the thin, murky expanse of the East River from Manhattan. And, despite tough B-boy (as in beat boxes, as in those who carry ghetto blasters and wear "homeboy" or gang-style clothing) looks, and proclamations that "We're not Michael Jackson and this is not *Thriller*," the boys of Run-D.M.C. are almost as straight.

Their parents are not drug dealers or

ex-cons, but nurses, teachers, and engineers. As kids, Run and D.M.C. went to private Catholic schools. Their goals until recently were college degrees rather than gold records. Run majored in mortuary science at LaGuardia Community College and D.M.C. studied business administration at St. John's University.

What distinguishes the trio from most other rappers is their sensible, albeit middle class, values. Run and D.M.C. don't rap about sexual conquests, gang wars or getting high on drugs, but about the value of a formal education and self-esteem, and the dangers of drugs.

However, like most kids, from slums or suburbs, they know what's happening on the streets. *Run-D.M.C.*, their first album, is dedicated to June Bug, a friend who was killed in what they believe was a drug-related incident. "I see a lot of kids doing the wrong thing and I'd like to tell them to do the right thing," says Run, unofficial spokesman for the group. "We're just trying to keep them on the right track."

"We listened to other rappers but they weren't saying what we wanted to hear," continues Run, as the other two members of the group nod in agreement. "So, we put together a rap for the kids that was also good dance music. But, it is really just a pep talk."

However, the biggest success of their brief career has been "Rock Box," a single which has sold more than 750,000 copies. No other rap record has penetrated deeper into mainstream pop culture, and its video, featuring a guest appearance by zany Professor Irwin Corey, was the first rap-vid to appear on MTV. "Rock Box" features a fierce, sarcastic rap about people who use status symbols to impress others, fused with a searing metallic guitar solo by ex-Blondie sideman Eddie Martinez. Run and D.M.C. exchange staccato verses—"Calvin Klein's no friend of mine/Don't want nobody's name on my behind"—while Martinez mixes Hendrix-type chords with a pulsating boom-box beat by Jam Master Jay, and Orange Krush's electronic percussion hooks.

Run and D.M.C. have tremendous rhythm and timing, and their raps are enhanced by invigorating but usually sparse musical arrangements produced by Larry Smith and Russell Simmons (Run's older

brother, who manages the group and a mere 17 other rap acts). Larry Smith strives to keep the arrangements simple so the words and music balance, allowing the listener to flow with the rap or the beat. *Run-D.M.C.* is one of the few rap groups that records original instrumental music to be scratched by their deejay. Most rap groups "borrow" other groups' tunes and rap over the instrumental breaks. *Run-D.M.C.*'s music is provided by Orange Krush, the original backup band for master-rapper Kurtis Blow. Now, the studio group comprises Smith, Simmons, Jam Master Jay, and a few studio musicians.

Much of *Run-D.M.C.*'s first album is heavily influenced by Kurtis Blow and the original Orange Krush. "Sucker M.C.'s" was derived from a song recorded by Orange Krush, and "Hard Times" is a remake of one of Blow's earlier records. However, when asked to name their all-time favorite albums, none of the members of *Run-D.M.C.* mention other rappers or reggae artists. Run names *Diana Ross Presents the Jackson Five*; *Super Disco Volume II*, by various artists; and *The Tale of the Tape* by Billy Squier. D.M.C. lists his top three as *Gratitude* by Earth, Wind & Fire; *Toys in the Attic* by Aerosmith; and *The Tale of the Tape*. Jam Master Jay cites *Stone Jam*, by Slave; *Super Disco Breaks Volumes I and II*, by various artists; and *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson Five*. Obviously, like their values, the group's musical roots are very middle-class or middle of the road, (and their tastes very similar) which probably helps explain their ability to cross over and reach white audiences.

There were no guns, there were no tanks

There were no atomic bombs
And to be frank, oh boy, there were no arms

Just people working hand in hand
There was a feeling of peace all across the land

Everyone was treated on an equal basis

No matter what color, religion or races

We weren't afraid to show our faces
It was cool to chill in foreign places

Poignant, poetic, probably Utopian dreams like this seem to reflect a generation's deepest fear and strongest hope. This is rap that sees beyond the ghetto. Its accomplishment is not that it has reached white ears but that it has transcended color barriers.

The trio's songs are not just heavy raps. The boys have fun, too; and few if any groups have more energy. *King of Rock*, their second album, is pure foot-stomping, hand-jivin' entertainment from start to finish. Again, Eddie Martinez puts down some searing guitar licks on "King of Rock" and "Can You Rock It Like This," while reggae legend Yellowman performs on "Roots, Rap, Reggae."

Their live concerts, more than their records, will make you a fan. If your feet don't move, you may be too old to groove, like over the hill, as in almost dead. Their high-energy romp will leave you exhausted whether you break or just watch. *Run-D.M.C.* has the juice. And we're not talking Tropicana.

Lost until now, albums
by the Velvet
Underground and John
Fogerty are surprise
delights. Also: excellent
debuts by Sade, Bronski
Beat, Lloyd Cole and
the Commotions and 'til
tuesday.

SPINS



Dorothy Greenhaus

Platter du Jour

The Velvet Underground

VU

Verve/Polygram



One of the great strengths and also the fatal weakness of the Velvet Underground was that they made their greatest statements as a band at the very beginning of their recording career. Rather than marking time for a couple of mediocre albums and then hitting their stride on the third, they turned in a masterpiece first time out. Their debut album, *The Velvet Underground with Nico*, absolutely established both their music and their image. Through form, content and even packaging, they made it clear that they had the corner on pervert-gothic for the psychedelic revolution. Black-and-white publicity pictures showed a gang of Rayban vampires clearly capable of intoning tunes of bondage and narcotics.

Behind the image, though, the early Velvets were actually quite close to incompetent. Lou Reed was a would-be Bob Dylan, and John Cale a refugee from avant-garde piano marathons. Maureen Tucker monotonously beat on upturned bass drums with mallets, while Sterling Morrison was less than an adept guitar player looking for a home in the atonal freakout. None were strictly capable of anything that had previously been accepted as rock music. The magic—and the reason that the first album became the cornerstone of a school of rock that extends from David Bowie to Nick Cave—was a combination that for once produced something a lot greater than the sum of its parts.

Through the second album, *White Light/White Heat*, the image was maintained and even stretched to the shrieking limit on the title track and the 17-minute feedback epic, "Sister Ray." From that point on, however, the individual members of the band, starting to feel their various strengths, began to pull in different directions, both away from each other and from the beautiful, damned collective persona. By the arrival of the simply titled *The Velvet Underground*, there was a noticeable

disparity of direction. Cale had left the band and was starting to lay the foundations of his solo career, while Morrison and Tucker seemed to be looking for something that could come close to a viable pop group.

The tapes that have been assembled under the title VU (a cutesy pun linking the band's initials and the studio volume unit meter) are what essentially would have been the Velvets' fourth album if it hadn't been buried by Verve Records and left in the vaults until it was rediscovered in the spring of last year. The majority of the songs were cut at New York's Record Plant between late 1969 and early 1970, and they show a good deal more than just disparate directions; they reveal a band going through a painful fragmentation. Within a few months of its completion, Lou Reed would be gone.

The start is healthy enough. The opening cut, "I Can't Stand It," is the kind of throb thrash that made Lou Reed famous. It's in the spirit of "I'm Waiting for the Man" and "Sweet Jane," but considerably more disposable, with lyrics that hark back to the Bob Dylan of "Maggie's Farm"—"I live with 13 dead cats/A purple dog that wears spats." The main innovation is a guitar line employing an Eddie Cochran echo that rather makes it sound like the psychobilly of a half-dozen years later.

The major John Cale contribution, "Stephanie Says," also sounds recognizably Velvet. (And indeed it should, having been recorded before he quit in 1968.) It's virtually a direct referral to the first album. Both the melody and the function—another bittersweet homage to the negative girls of fashionable Manhattan—steers it awfully close to "All Tomorrow's Parties II."

So far so good, but from here on in the train progressively tries to jump the rails. The poppy "She's My Best Friend" has a bridge on which the vocals start to sound like an incongruous answer to the Beatles.

Edited by Rudy Langlais

"Ocean" and "Andy's Chest" are slightly gauche tryouts of songs that will return in a sharper and better-produced form on subsequent Lou Reed solo albums. "Lisa Says" proves to be a piano-dominated dirge, with all the crispness of a first demo and Lou seriously straining for the chorus. "Foggy Notion" is a trifling sex song which hardly holds up in the wake of "Sister Ray" or "I Heard Her Call My Name." Just to prove that everyone in the band gets to do a tune, Maureen Tucker contributes a novelty song called "I'm Sticking to You," that would be better suited to a country bar band used to playing behind chicken wire. A country specter in the form of a Rolling Stones' steel guitar and urban yodel, also haunts "One of These Days," but in this instance, it makes for possibly the most pleasant song in the whole collection.

The obvious temptation is to dismiss this clutch of tracks as little more than a convenient contract-breaker for a band that was not only going through an internal schism but was also at loggerheads with Verve, and the parent company MGM. In the recently published biography *Up-Tight: The Velvet Underground*, by Victor Bockris and Gerard Malanga (William Morrow, \$7.95), Maureen Tucker denies this.

"We didn't say we'll just go in and lay down anything and screw, 'em. There was a sense that it probably wouldn't be released by them. I think I figured it would just get picked up by the next record company, not realizing that MGM would own it. But when we switched labels, MGM wouldn't give up the tapes."

Not that the band could be blamed for indulging in a spot of deal busting. Communication between artists and label had virtually ceased to exist. In 1969, MGM Records had rather abruptly come under the control of an individual called Mike Curb, who had previously managed a radio chain and would later become Lieutenant Governor of California. Curb seemed obsessed with cleansing rock 'n' roll of drugs and deviant sex, and injecting what have now become known as family values. Clearly, he wasn't about to reach an accommodation with the Velvets.

Whatever they might be worth, the tapes vanished in the MGM vaults and weren't thought of again until April, 1984, when Polygram producer Bill Levenson was preparing for the re-release of the original three albums. A chance remark by Lou Reed and some of the conversations quoted in the Bockris/Melanga book convinced Levenson that somewhere there was a cache of unreleased and even uncatalogued Velvet Underground tapes and the only answer was to go look for them. Literally working outwards from the letter "V," Levenson eventually came up with the crucial stack of tapes. On examining them, however, he discovered that they were on an obsolete form of twelve-track that, even with an adapted 24-track machine, could only be played backward on modern equipment. Levenson and engineer Michael Barbiero were forced to painstakingly transfer, remix and generally clean up the material.

All this obviously begs the question: Was it really worth the trouble? The dilemma regarding *VU* is deciding where to stand when you evaluate the found



Donald Greenhaus

tracks. As a piece of rock archeology, they are clearly invaluable, filling a crucial gap in the Velvet Underground canon. As a piece of entertainment—even a period piece—they provoke the feeling that, if it had been released in sequence, the album probably would have been greeted as an almost unqualified dog. *Loaded*, the album that came out in its place, is far superior and much more cohesive (even if some of that cohesion may have been a result of the surviving members of the band remixing it in Lou Reed's absence). *VU* seems to lie somewhere around both the aesthetic and commercial halfway points. What Polygram has unearthed is neither a curio nor a masterwork. It is a very representative album of a band at a somewhat bleak point during the latter days of its career.

—Mick Farren



John Fogerty
Centerfield
Warner

Hoo Doo
Unreleased Bootleg Tape

To hear him tell it, John Fogerty had made one mediocre album (*John Fogerty*, 1975) and was about to release a second when he was "generously" given his release by Elektra/Asylum Records. But it doesn't wash. That first LP may not have had all the crackle and pop of his best work with Creedence Clearwater Revival, but it did yield at least four exceptional cuts and one classic, "Almost Saturday Night," since covered by everyone from Rick Nelson to Karla DeVito. And the follow-up LP, *Hoo Doo*, which wasn't even

deemed worthy of release, is hardly hack work, containing the most searing political diatribe of Fogerty's career, "Between the Lines," as well as several other gems.

Admittedly, parts of *Hoo Doo* are somewhat overbaked, but it is odd that the most bloated cut, "You Got the Magic," was the only song released (as a single in February, 1976). One can't help but suspect both Elektra's taste and Fogerty's own insecurities. It's not hard to envision a disillusioned John Fogerty in 1976, at the height of disco redundancy. Despite a run of hits bettered only by The Beatles, Creedence Clearwater Revival didn't provide ongoing, album-to-album drama as did, say, the mercurial Lennon or Dylan. Fogerty revealed little of the personality behind that incredible, raspy voice. So when his lean, clean, intractable rock sound fell out of favor, he took his ball and glove and went home. *Hoo Doo* closes with "On the Run" and it is as if Fogerty knew he was headed for the sidelines for a while: "But if I have to run/you know I'll keep the flame burning inside of me."

The "flame," of course, is rock 'n' roll, of which Fogerty is both slave and master. In addition to his acknowledged debt to such artists as Hank Williams, Little Richard, Fats Domino and Jimmie Rodgers, Fogerty has his own formidable canon to draw on, and he paraphrases himself all over *Centerfield*. "Old Man down the Road" is a descendant of "Run Through the Jungle" and "Green River" reminding us that a riff does not have to be new to be fresh. He plays chords you could drive a truck through. "Big Train (from Memphis)" is both great rockabilly and an ode to the form, a cut that is loving yet wistful ("Big train from Memphis/Now it's gone, gone, gone"). "I Saw II on TV" seems an innocent mixture of nostalgia and history, conjuring TV images of a generation, but closes with a parent's howl: "... they chained my mind/To an endless tomb/When they took my only son from me." The final refrain echoes, "Who'll Stop the Rain."

Three cuts on side two cover more psychological terrain, beginning with "Searchlight," a swamp-rocker in the tradition of "Born on the Bayou," subtly underpinned by a zoom bass and a minimal, punctuating horn chart. (Have I mentioned that Fogerty plays all the instruments on the album?) As if answering his own *Hoo Doo* finale, Fogerty asks, "What was the demon that made me run?" The title track finds him preparing to return to the spotlight ("Put me in Coach/I'm ready to play today") and, though it's one of his more pedestrian arrangements, a sweet playfulness shines through. But he provides the ultimate rock-hero reason for coming back on the self-explanatory "I Can't Help Myself," hitting the high notes in full throttle, rejoicing in his own helplessness.

As any pro will tell you, it's tough to sit out a season (no less eight) and return to any semblance of peak form. But whether *Centerfield* spawns hits or not, John Fogerty has emerged with skills intact and fires burning.

—Gary Kenton



'til tuesday
Voices Carry
Epic

Entering the spacious aural world of this young Boston band's debut album is a pleasure although not a revelation. Almost all the tunes are instantly catchy, if not especially inspired. 'til tuesday's brand of echoing, hook-laden, post-new-wave pop has been given maximum hype by the same legion of promo people who pushed her label-mate Cyndi Lauper to the top of the charts. And in lead singer Aimee Mann they may have a star. A gaunt, high-cheekboned, spikey blond, she has her own look and a voice that's evocative, though not yet distinctive enough to stake out its own turf in the crowded field of female vocalists.

While letting go with a hint of Lauper yelp from time to time, Mann sounds more like a cool Stevie Nicks afloat in the smooth California wash of the slower songs, especially on "You Know the Rest," a strong ballad bolstered by a Buckingham-like backing vocal. On "Watch Me Bleed," a chugging chorused guitar and pulsing bubblegum bass frame a tougher sentiment ("I guess you gave as good as you got/I guess this love is dead/ but I paid such a lot/the price you pay/ living under glass."), with Mann showing a bit of edge, calling to mind Chrissie Hynde's smart colloquialism.

"Love in a Vacuum," "Maybe Monday," "I Could Get Used to This"—the list of catchy song titles goes on. The lyrics don't challenge but they satisfy, making vagueness a virtue. One of the attractions of this sort of pop lyric is the way the sound of the words can transform their meaning. Stock phrases take on new resonance.

Respected British producer Mike Thorne has done a masterful job with the mix. Mann's slap bass perfectly complements Michael Hausman's monster kick/snare and guitarist Robert Holmes' delaying licks, while not spectacularly inventive, mesh smoothly with the moody flourishes of Joey Pesce's synthesizer. Each instrument seems to occupy its own discrete niche, creating an effect that's full and roomy.

After gaining notoriety in New England by winning WBCN's '83 Rock 'n' Roll Rumble (an area-wide battle of the bands) and topping that station's local music playlist with their independent release of "Love in a Vacuum," it seems likely that 'til tuesday will not have to wait long for national attention.

—E. Brooks



Mick Jagger
She's the Boss
CBS

One day, I put to Mick Jagger the generally popular opinion that his/the Rolling Stones' music was rough on women.

"It was sort of fashionable at one time to be critical like that," protested Jagger. "Of course, when you're very immature, I think you write from the heart a lot of times. I think what upset people was that, in the early lyrics, I just said what I thought at a time when very few people did. Our attitude toward women was a bit more hard-edged than the normal pop-song attitude which, up to that point, was like 'Venus in blue jeans,' never 'you bitch.'"

Well, to whatever extent the criticism is valid, Jagger may be doing some penance on this first solo album, *She's the Boss*, an interesting work, reminiscent of late '60s (to some fans, vintage) Stones. Perhaps it's middle-age, but Mick has finally discovered what we all seem to find sooner or later. As he sings from the title cut: "She's the boss in bed. She's the boss in my head . . . I stay at home. It's all over. The party's over." And is it a conquered and henpecked Mick Jagger who is now singing: "Want me to fix your hair? I'll fix your hair. Want me to fix your dinner? I'll fix your dinner?"

No, the party isn't over for Mick. The cuts on *She's the Boss* may be some of the best material we are ever going to get from the leader of the self-proclaimed "World's Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Band." And although Jagger says he missed not recording with the Stones, support from Pete Townshend, Jeff Beck, Herbie Hancock and others on the album more than make up for it.

The good work of co-producers Bill Laswell and Nile Rodgers is apparent on all nine tracks, especially on "Hard Woman," which must surely be Jagger's best ballad since "As Tears Go By." Jagger once complained "the really rotten thing is that I've written a lot of songs that are romantic—love songs, that people don't always remember." I doubt this will be the case with "Hard Woman."

And, no, Mick hasn't gone totally soft. The old Jagger bravado still remains: "Lucky in Love" is the cut most reminiscent of the early Rolling Stones.

In the funky "Secrets," Jagger will continue to anger feminist critics: "You've been bad. You've been bad. Better come over here and take your punishment," he admonishes deliciously. On "Half a Loaf," Jagger accepts the blame: "I can't keep quiet because I'm indiscreet."

They're all solid tracks on *She's the Boss*. "Just Another Night," the first single released, is eminently danceable and very listenable. In "Lonely at the Top" the usually private Jagger reveals a bit about himself. (Tease, tease. Can you wait? Should you buy it? Will a friend have it?) From "Running Out of Luck," we get reassurance that there is nothing to worry about, Mick is still the same. So you can almost believe in one of rock 'n' roll's great, essential fairy tales: that Mick Jagger still can't get no satisfaction.

—Allan Sonnenschein



Lloyd Cole and the Commotions
Rattlesnakes
Geffen

Remember words? No, not catchy song titles or trendy group names but words, lyrics that have something to say. Not since Dire Straits' "Sultans of Swing" has a song hit me like the Commotions' "Perfect Skin" (the first cut and the band's original British single). Call it punk/folk with just enough pop elements to make it accessible to all. The guitars ring in the same chiming fashion as vintage Byrds and the song rocks with the passion of

The Velvet Underground's classic "Sweet Jane." Lloyd Cole and the Commotions are the most interesting new band since Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers, and *Rattlesnakes* is a brilliant first album.

Sure, Lloyd Cole's influences seem to be piled high around him. Both he and Blair Cowan (the intriguing and excellent keyboardist) come from a folk background; they call it Red Folk, but is there any other kind? They come from Scotland, the new hot breeding ground for bands, and share the same dedication to rock anthems as do fellow Scots Big Country and the Eurythmics. The lyrics are truly exceptional and captivating. Lou Reed should be proud; Jonathan Richman, too—maybe others.

"Down on Mission Street," a haunting self-portrait and mid-tempo rocker with beautiful strings, could be this year's "Desolation Row." Lead singer Lloyd Cole writes or co-writes all the songs and seems to write all the lyrics as well. On "Mission Street," and on others such as "Charlotte Street"—a boy/girl odyssey with almost (dare I say) a trippy quality and a walking beat—he and Neil Clark play the electric and acoustic guitars with clarity and taste. There are no blurred heavy-metal power chords anywhere. All the songs sound as if they're about real people in real places filtered through Lloyd Cole's pop mythology and shaped by the folk/rock/pop Commotions.

If you're smart enough to know what Cole is singing about when he sings things like "You spell audaciously" ("Charlotte Street") or about a lady who resembles Eva Marie Saint in *On the Waterfront* (on the title cut "Rattlesnakes"), well . . . then this is a smart and literary rock 'n' roll record for you. It's time to think and listen and boogie all at once. Hell, they shoot Hemingway novels for TV, don't they?

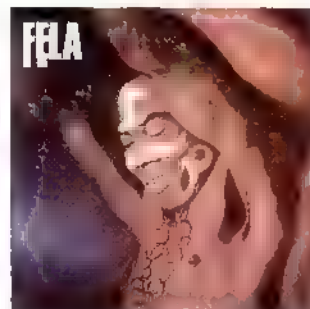
Of course, a little research might be necessary in the same way it is to understand Who songs: e.g., the song title "2CV" (a beautiful acoustic ballad). A 2CV is a small Citroën car, common in France, that looks like a Volkswagen bug that's been over inflated with helium.

But none of the excellent lyrics would matter if the record didn't sound great and swing, thanks to Paul Hardiman's production. The quality of sound and the danceable beats are as contemporary as you'd want, but he combines that with seldom-heard elements such as banjo, accordion, and strings, which, together with the traditional rock elements—guitars, bass, and drums—make for good and varied listening. This is the first record I've heard of late that rejects the techno-pop banality we've been drowning in without being overly self-conscious in its minimalism or wearing a chip on its shoulder.

Lloyd Cole's voice is somewhat idiosyncratic and requires a few listens to get used to (the same as Lou Reed or Dylan). But, thank God, he lacks that second-rate lounge-lizard quality that seems to be common to English singers of the last five years. Lloyd sings with personality. When he goes to falsetto in "Patience," to express his depression, you believe him. He slides effortlessly from song to song. Great singers don't have great voices, they have great feelings.

Lloyd Cole and The Commotions is the kind of band that shouldn't read reviews like this. They should go on in a vacuum, listening to their own pipes and making fine albums like this. The future is exciting. This is rock 'n' roll again! Wake up and smell the coffee!

—Elliott Murphy



Fela
Army Arrangement
Celluloid

If you haven't yet heard of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, it isn't because he hasn't been trying to get your attention. Since the early '70s, Nigeria's most controversial musician has also been one of its finest. Now that Fela sits in jail on trumped-up currency violation charges, a tiny record label with a bit more guts than his old label (EMI) is releasing a three-cut LP that contains Fela's side of the story. The master tapes of *Army Arrangement* were recorded by his band, Egypt 80, just before his imprisonment, then were smuggled out of the country by his management to be turned into a timely case for the defense. Celluloid, the little French label that could, and a network of sympathetic agents and musicians are now behind an international "Free Fela" movement, which, beginning with this record, hopes to instigate a series of benefit concerts around the world.

Bill Laswell, producer and boy wonder of the Material organization, was entrusted with the overdubs and final mix, a tricky, unenviable task. But having innumerable old Fela rhythm tracks to sift for ideas, and having on hand a guest-star rhythm section representing the best in reggae (Sly Dunbar) and progressive funk (Bernie Worrell), Laswell was able to merge the clarion call of James Brown's horn section with Talking Heads's muscular sophistication and Sly & Robbie's dubwise alternation between textured silence and electronic "bottom."

The guiding pulse on each song here is lucid and dramatic—less complex perhaps than tracks Egypt 80 finished themselves, but no less compelling. Rather, the clean, recognizable guitar, syndrum, and organ lines in "Cross Examination" will make that dance track readily comprehensible to a rock 'n' roll-reared audience. Less is more when you're reproducing a music not your own by ear. Thus, Laswell's work on the anthemic "Army Arrangement" shows admirable restraint. "In this court we shall speak English for the benefit of foreigners," Fela's melodic

baritone declaims after a lengthy instrumental introduction. And I couldn't have described Laswell's technique any better myself. Not since the first single he crafted for soul diva Nona Hendryx has he been so solicitous of a singer's individuality.

"Government Chicken Board" is about straightening one's own house before dabbling in outside business, which might be called the sub-theme of this record. Dunbar and percussionist Ayib Dieng give the cut a syrupy conga-line back beat under lyrics urging Nigerian youth to unite and challenge authority. After "Cross Examination" and "Army Arrangements" (damaging list of white-collar crimes long sanctioned by military and civilian regimes, "Chicken Boards" falsely languid call to reform states the obvious with deadly cool: "Nigerian youth have two ears and two eyes . . . Better life we can find . . . Make nobody dey fool us/make nobody make us fool." This is, after all, the only answer possible to an army arrangement, under which, as Fela sings, "If they no like you hang/If you hang you go die/You go die for nothing/We go carry your body to police station/You die wrongfully . . ."

—Carol Cooper



Richard Thompson
Across A Crowded Room
Polydor

Linda Thompson
One Clear Moment
Warner

It's cruel to review these records in tandem, but how can one resist when they were released simultaneously and explore different sides of the same trauma? Neither Richard Thompson, indisputably the greatest guitarist/songwriter in the folk-rock idiom, nor Linda Thompson, his ex-wife and underrated partner/vocalist, shrinks from addressing the vagaries of

their marriage or its demise (after eight years, two children and six exquisite albums). You can't get much more graphic than "She Twists the Knife Again" (Richard) or "Long may you rot in hell" (Linda, on "Only a Boy"). Obviously, they both lay it on the line.

Longtime Thompson fans, after hearing Linda wring power and sorrow from Richard's lyrics for so long, may not be ready for the playful punk Linda displays on *One Clear Moment*. The opening cut, "Can't Stop the Girl," is both a personal proclamation of her indomitable spirit and a feminist anthem. "Best of Friends," "Hanging On" and "Lover Won't You Throw Me a Line" also underscore her independence; musically, they are AOR torch songs, more seamless and commercial than anything Richard would ever do. Lyrically, the former song projects a model of post-marital adjustment, while the latter two are plaintive but clearly do not pertain to Richard.

Elsewhere, the scars are more evident. Linda's musical roots may not go as deep as Richard's, but her melodies are rich; she sings from the heart, and, like him, she writes cutting lyrics, world-weary and wise, like these from the stunning ballad "Telling Me Lies": "You don't know what a chance is/Until you have to please one/I clog up my ears/I close my eyes/I still hear your voice/And it's telling me lies." Even more venomous, and cathartic, are "Take Me To the Subway," where she shares her feelings of degradation, and the beautiful "Only A Boy," a quietly seething indictment of Richard and the rest of his gender.

If Linda misses anything on her solo debut it is Richard's guitar. Running off notes at a breakneck pace one moment, bending a note almost imperceptibly the next, and mustering a different guitar sound for every occasion, Richard's command is such that his instrument serves as an eloquent extension of his limited vocal range, punctuating and amplifying each song. Across *A Crowded Room* boasts three firm rockers, "Fire In the Engine Room," "Little Blue Number" and "I Ain't Going To Drag My Feet No More," on all of these he puts nimble ax-wielders like Eddie Van Halen and Adrian Belew to shame, refusing to sacrifice a single note or nuance, even at high speed.

Richard's album reaffirms familiar Thompson themes. "Walking Through a Wasted Land" is a morality tale, with Richard ominously summing up the state of the union with lines such as: "You can buy a lot of shame with your money." The sprightly, quasi-reggae arrangement of "You Don't Say" is ironic coupled with Richard's mock-naïve views on gossip, one of his pet peeves even before he and Linda became the object of so much of it. "When the Spell is Broken" is a classic postmortem for a love affair—"Love letters you wrote/Are pushed back down your throat/And leave you chokin'/When the spell is broken."

With Joe Boyd, his longtime producer, Richard continues to fill out his sound. The horn section, a bit disjointed on *Hand of Kindness* (1983), is far better integrated here and there is increased flexibility with the arrangements. Most ambitious is the six-minute "Love in a Faithless Country," a caustic, Brechtian journey to the darker

side of the battle of the sexes. When Richard sings the chorus "That's the way we make love," he makes the bedroom seem like a prison. Harrowing.

For those who viewed Linda Thompson as a secondary talent to Richard, *One Clear Moment* should provide a clear indication of her contribution to their musical partnership. She deserves more credit and some airplay, too. As for Richard, it is good to see that he has not let his new environs (can this dour Sufi/Celt really live in sunny Southern California?) significantly alter his worldview or his high standards. He's not ready for the hot tub yet.

Two Thompsons. Two records as rewarding as any you'll hear all year. May they never be lumped together again.

—Gary Kenton



John Hiatt
Warming Up to the Ice Age
Geffen

Hiatt has natural brown hair in a normal-citizen style and he's white and wears a regular black suit and a regular white shirt and he plays a black Gretsch guitar. From that you can almost tell he's okay. He plays non-trendy, smart rock 'n' roll. He's new wave in the sense that ceased being applied to music when it started being applied to overcoats.

Hiatt has the kind of voice that lets you refer to him as "this cat." This cat has a nice bluesy voice, as if Stevie Winwood had been black and from Detroit. This is soulful music of a variety of styles. "The Crush" has some very B.B. King guitar in a casually fly rhythmic package: cool, sophisticated but bad. "She Said the Same Thing to Me" sounds sort of like South Side Johnny trying to recapture the spirit of Rufus Thomas. He knows how to jazz a song and he doesn't sound like he's mimicking emotions off an old record; he sounds like he's sort of lived. Elvis Costello also sings on this track and he's pretty jazzy, too, by now.

"The Usual" has that grabbing rockola groove of, say, "Sharp Dressed Man" and ZZ Top, and that's a compliment. It's got a little less torque, but it's cool and literate, and "I'll have the usual" is such a great refrain that it's amazing nobody wrote a song around it before.

This record made me think of the time when we thought Dr. Feelgood was going to be the next big band. It's back-to-basics, straight-ahead R&B, but it's also subtle and energetic. "Zero House" is a

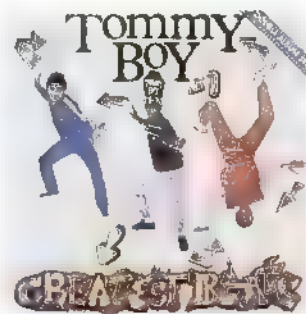
bluesy Delta interstate rocker. (My wife thinks it's totally jive, but I think it's great.) Obviously, these forms of declaration are postured, but so, we might be reminded, was the sonnet. "Zero House" has a really nice breakdown that transforms a Booker T.-style riff through stacked instrumental tones, over which Hiatt effectively mumbles poesy.

The title track, "Warming Up to the Ice Age," employs a whole spectrum of theatrical vocal postures, many unemployed since 60's British rock. This isn't a put-down. There's a big rock swivel beat, and power chords trading off with finger-pop bass. Hiatt enunciates up a storm with words that are patently, as they say, clever. The idea is that the girl in question is icy but she's "warming up to the ice age." I have to at least partially like any song rhyming "frozen like a punchbowl swan, frozen like a mastodon." "One cold shoulder don't stop no show" is also a pretty fair line.

It's not easy to do a song called "I'm a Real Man" these days, but imagine how tough it is to do one that means it. Hiatt means it, although there is some wit involved. This is in the tradition of "Sixty Minute Man" and "I'm a Man," and it's nice and sly and oily. "Number One Honest Game" is a terrific song—quite offbeat, sort of a disco bossa nova ballad. It's eccentric and almost sounds like an old hit and it's very nicely sung.

"I've Got a Gun" is a stalking, metallic funk rocker, sort of Brooks Brothers/ZZ Top fusion. Lowdown hoodoo mojo with flair and élan, you know. I like this John Hiatt. He must be somebody because Elvis and other somebodies sing and play on this record. But without even knowing his bio or which side of the Atlantic he's from I can dig it. I heard the record playing at the record store and it got me thinking.

—Glenn O'Brien



Various Artists
Greatest Beats
Tommy Boy

In April 1982, Tommy Boy Records released "Planet Rock," by Afrika Bambaataa & Soulsonic Force and changed the rap map. Until then, rap had been dominated by the Sugarhill label and the Sugarhill sound. Working basically from a James Brown/George Clinton groove thing, Sugarhill producers Sylvia Robinson and Jiggs Chase, and their crack house

band, laid down greasy, bass-heavy funk, against which the Sugarhill Gang, Funky Four Plus One, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, and a seemingly endless parade of other rappers, threw down. Their funk was awesomely powerful; it defined badass. All rap acts went looking for Sugarhill's perfect beat.

"Planet Rock" changed that. Instead of presenting traditional urban R&B funk, the platter reached to Eurodisco, beat-box robotics, and scratch like technosounds. It even quoted from Kraftwerk's electronic beauty "Trans Europe Express." While the Sugarhill monster sound was nasty, "Planet Rock" was clean. It was the first "cool" rap record. It also introduced to the world Arthur Baker, producer, and Jellybean Benitez, master mixer.

Two months later, Sugarhill released "The Message," thereby regaining absolute supremacy on the ghetto-blastar battlefield. But Tommy Boy, with its cross-cultural, futurist sound, had staked its claim. While Sugarhill started to falter (until the Furious Five's "White Lines (Don't Do It)" Tommy Boy turned it out. Building on the sound pioneered by Baker and his sometimes collaborator John Robie, Tom Silverman's label became the dominant force in dance music. It even started snaring fugitives from the Sugarhill house band for sessions. *Greatest Beats* is not only a label sampler, it's a valid document of a volatile two-year period in the history of hip-hop.

Kingpin of the Tommy Boy roster is Bambaataa, whose "Planet Rock" and "Looking for the Perfect Beat" are the greatest beats on *Greatest Beats*. But the Jonzun Crew's funky juvenile sci-fi jive, the inspiration behind Newcleus' "Jam On It," shines through on "Pack Jam (Look Out for the OVC)" and "Space Cowboys," and the Force M.D.'s' classic streetcorner harmonies are perfect on the infectious "Let Me Love You." The most ambitious cut in the package, the chilling "No Sell Out," features former Sugarhill beat-buster Keith LeBlanc, syncopating furiously underneath a manipulated tape of a Malcolm X speech. My only complaint with this excellent compilation is

that Bambaataa's collaboration with James Brown, "Unity," appears only as a quick scratch in the megamix that fills side four. Otherwise, in the jargon, this sucker is def. If you didn't score the 12 inches at four bucks a throw, here's your chance to get it all under a groove for a paltry eight.

—John Leland



Andreas Vollenweider
White Winds
CBS

White Winds is Swiss harpist Andreas Vollenweider's third full-length album on CBS. If you're familiar with either of the first two, you'll find no surprises here. Andreas plays an electronically modified, amplified harp and is accompanied by a small group of musicians who play drums, flutes, cellos and synthesizers. Vollenweider has built his career around combining unusual sounds: besides his space-age harp, he also uses dozens of ethnic instruments from around the world (and misspells most of them in the liner notes).

Vollenweider's 1984 concert in New York was an immediate sellout, and it's not hard to see why. Vollenweider has all the tools to make great music; the melodies in "Hall of the Stairs" and "The Glass Hall" prove that. But, he has settled for making mood music instead. It may be great while you're reading tea leaves, but

it doesn't withstand close listening. And yet Vollenweider's first two albums have done remarkably well, and *White Winds* will undoubtedly please his many fans.

Some of Vollenweider's atmospheric pieces, for example the first cut, "White Winds/The White Boat," sound fine. The electronic drones combine well with ethnic percussion and harmonics from the harp. But along comes the Bob James-style rhythm section and the layered harp music—and suddenly we're in Easy Listening Land. This *should* be a good album; instead it's about as exciting as a shopping mall full of rice pudding. The drums and percussion, even in those rare moments where they pick up the tempo, are curiously lifeless. Some of the moodier sections work well, but these tend to be quite short.

As always, the production (by Vollenweider himself) is impeccable. The music's glittering surface, which is what sells his albums after all, is well served by the mix and the choice of instruments. However, the vocals are genuinely dreadful. During the 70s, the 32-year-old harpist worked with a European group called "Poetry and Music," that had become popular in German-speaking countries. He also wrote music for films, television, and radio productions. Perhaps that explains the unobtrusiveness of Vollenweider's music. A piece like "The Woman and the Stone," for example, contains enough percussion to shake the Alps, but the song goes nowhere.

The best track on *White Winds*, unaccountably buried in the middle of side two, is "Brotherhood." A large group of bells, gongs, and chimes recreate the sound, and at least some of the excitement, of Indonesian gamelans—large percussion orchestras with lots of gongs, drums, wooden xylophones, etc. That's followed by "Sisterseed," which clocks in at 93 seconds. It's just a quiet little improvisation featuring the cheng (a Chinese harp) and what sounds like an Indian sitar, but which I suspect is Vollenweider's cleverly disguised harp. A little more music like this, and Vollenweider might have something.

Most of *White Winds* is like bathing in

club soda. Nevertheless, there's definitely a market for it. Each generation, it seems, finds its own type of muzak. In the 70s, it was that shuffling, lyrical California jazz which practically defined the word "wimpy." For the yuppie generation, Andreas Vollenweider seems to fit the bill.

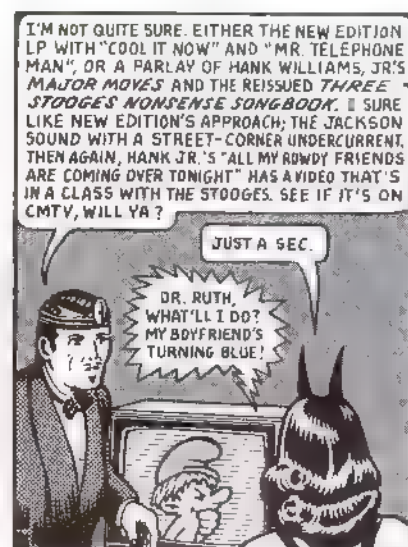
—John Schaefer



Sade
Diamond Life
Portrait

The first time I saw Sade was two winters ago. She was sitting in the darkened, smoky back room of a New York City club called The Pyramid, her striking face illuminated by a single candle on the table in front of her. That indelible image remained with me until the release of this album in England last summer. Suddenly, the familiar face was everywhere, and it had a name. When I listened to *Diamond Life*, I realized circumstance had provided me with a moody first impression that proved a perfect introduction.

American followers of the trendy British press will expect Sade to sound like the new Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, or even a female Al Green. In the blitz of media attention following the U.K. release of this LP, the Nigerian-born 24-year-old was compared to those vocalists. But, her band, also named Sade, doesn't play pure jazz, funk, or soul as the triumphant



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press releases would have us believe. On the whole, *Diamond Life* is more than the sum of its sources, a fusion fresh to synth-weary ears.

Sade makes no apologies for not being completely original. She doesn't have to. Her cover of Timmy Thomas' "Why Can't We Live Together" is an interpretive version in its own right. The opening track on side one, "Smooth Operator," features co-writer Stuart Matthewson's skills as sax player and instrumental arranger. Sade's vocal phrasing is natural and unstudied (she claims only three years of singing experience). On this cut it is balanced by an interchange with melodic sax fills, and layered over a percussive base of keyboards and bongos. Synthetic percussion is happily absent throughout the record. After the synth-drum overkill of 1984 (the Year of the Linndrum), you can forgive Sade's second-hand samba, even as it approaches Girl-from-Ipanema superficiality.

"Sally" was inspired by Sade's waiting outside a seedy New York Salvation Army for a bus. Restraint saves this lyrical portrait of poverty from becoming a soap opera. Backed only by a sparse bass line and acoustic piano, she croons "With no money but his pride in his pocket/There's really no way he can go home," and a heavily reverberant snare booms echoes into all the empty aural niches. Along with "Hang on to Your Love," with its haunting minor melody and funk-driven, hypnotizing dance groove, this is the album's emotional forte.

Adjectives such as sultry, sophisticated, cool, and stylish honestly apply, despite being cliché. Sade really succeeds because she is at home with her own commerciality. Although she often disguises her lack of depth with a cool bravado—youth and pop are usually that way. This is only her first album. Her instinctive finesse is, alone, quite promising for the future.

—Sue Cummings



Slim Harpo
The Best of Slim Harpo
Rhino Records

This is actually a 1983 release, but I just bought it a few weeks ago; it took two years to find, so you might want to start looking now. When I was a teenager in the actual '60s there were weeks at a time when Slim Harpo was my guru, like when he had hits with "Baby Scratch My Back" and "Mohair Sam." (Charlie Rich did "Sam" first but Slim covered it for black

stations, reversing the usual pattern, and did the ultimate take.)

In 1968, Jagger said, "What's the point in listening to us doing 'I'm a King Bee' when you can hear Slim Harpo doing it?" Actually I still like the Stones' "King Bee" from their first LP, but Slim Harpo's version (he wrote it) is sexually hair-raising, challengingly playful, rootsy but unprecedented. If you heard the Stones' version first you probably thought that they added that wild, zooming bass part, but it's even stronger in Slim's unapproachable original. Same for the supertight arrangement of "Shake Your Hips," which the Stones did on *Exile on Main Street*. It's all there in Slim's original, which sounds like it was recorded in a garage and yet is absolutely powerful. Slim's "Got Love if You Want It" was popularized by the Kinks. Other songs here were covered by Van Morrison and Them, the Pretty Things, and Hank Williams Jr., among others.

This is a totally wonderful album by an underregarded genius writer, singer and harp player. You'll also just love "The Hippy Song," which Slim wrote after he started to pick up a young white following in the 60s. "Long hair," noted Slim, "don't make you bad." I'm growing it right now and my baby is scratching my back.

—Glenn O'Brien



Bronski Beat
The Age of Consent
MCA

Bronski Beat fashioned a young man's bitter memories of being driven away from home, alienated from his family, and persecuted by his friends, into a sweetly moving pop song in their recent hit single "Smalltown Boy."

If the lyric's meaning was left ambiguous, now *The Age of Consent* explains it all. The album's cover is emblazoned with the pink triangle patches homosexuals were forced to wear in Nazi concentration camps; the inner sleeve lists the minimum legal age for gay sex in 31 different countries. The printed lyrics mostly deal explicitly ("Need a Man Blues," "Screaming") or implicitly ("Why?" "Heatwave") with gay issues. Yet for a record that's so earnestly eager to get down and talk about sex, *The Age of Consent* is curiously unsexy, neutered. Despite its lyrics, it just isn't earthy. This is partly because Jimi Somerville's ethereal, choir-boy voice—the group's most distinctive feature—articulates pain much

more effectively than passion. But mostly it's because the album's principal songs all mine the rather overworked vein of late-'70s disco. This is clearly the music they grew up loving, and they approach it as fans rather than cynics. But as the most cynically manipulated form of all time, disco really isn't the right vehicle to carry the weight of sadness, anger and lust that they load onto it.

"Smalltown Boy" is the most successful of their songs because its power comes from the melody, not the rhythm; it has the texture of a fast ballad. On "Why?" the tiresome thump of the backing track negates the anguished cry of the vocals, pushing them toward melodrama. "Junk" is pure melodrama; its central riff (which is a killer), is entirely at cross-purpose with the words, which are pretty flimsy. Perhaps the best example of this problem is their reworking of Donna Summer's "I Feel Love." This version is warmer, more human and, as it fades out to a refrain of "Johnny Remember Me," a great deal more personal than the original. Summer's sullen, sluttish indifference was much more appropriate and twice as sexy.

My favorite moments on the album are when Bronski Beat drops the disco histrionics and comes on like the latter-day Boswell Sisters. Their cover of George Gershwin's "It Ain't Necessarily So" is a beautifully poised and languid combination of subdued playing and ensemble singing. Here, as on their own "Heatwave" and "No More War"—which both sound like tributes to Gershwin—their touch is so sure that they never slip over into period camp. They'll certainly make better albums, and for a debut this isn't at all bad. Even when the songs don't gel, the sentiments behind them are unquestionably real—which puts the band several steps ahead of the other currently fashionable gay group, also from Liverpool, England. Bronski say: Frankie are rotten charlatans.

—James Truman



Hüsker Dü
New Day Rising
SST

New Day Rising, the new Hüsker Dü album, doesn't just fulfill the enormous promise of the Minneapolis trio. It fulfills the even greater promise of punk rock. This is the punk album we've been waiting eight years for. Like no previous album, *New Day Rising* affirms everything that was good about punk in the first place and sums up all the variants that have

developed in the years since the Sex Pistols. On this album, the Hüsker dudes bridge the gap between the Pistols and R.E.M.

The album has everything going for it. It's loud. It's smart. It's accessible. It's tuneful. It's funny. It's angry. Without sacrificing any of the raw power or impassioned flailing that have made them one of the most electrifying bands on the planet, the Hüskers have developed into brilliant pop songwriters. After all, there is no rule that says brutal rock songs can't have killer hooks, nor that killer hooks have to be coddled in light arrangements. Singer/songwriter/guitarist Bob Mould has always been a fan of jangly sixties pop—last year the band even recorded a sonically overwhelming version of the Byrds' "Eight Miles High." Now, Mould, and fellow singer/songwriter/drummer Grant Hart, have learned to write the kind of loping melodies currently ringing out of the South.

The Hüskers propel their songs at you. Their sound buzzes incessantly with the abrasive high-end distortion of Mould's guitar and the noisy ringing of Hart's cymbals. Greg Norton's pure punk bass and Hart's hyperactive kick drum and snare rolls jam the bottom. They overload songs, creating an incredible rush of momentum. This music explodes. Catchy though the hooks may be, they are detonators in disguise.

The title track sums up the exultant message of *New Day Rising*. Over a surge of rising noise, Mould just screams the song title over and over, as triumphantly and passionately as he can. Elsewhere, the songwriting gets more involved. Mould's gripping "I Apologize" runs a couple of classic romantic pop hooks into an inspired frenzy. The band gets disturbingly intense on "59 Times the Pain" and goofy on the shuffle-beat "Books About UFO's." Mould and Hart cover a lot of ground without missing a step.

Last year's ambitious but overreaching Zen Arcade only hinted at this focusing of punk diffusion. The Hüskers have surely come a long way since their aptly titled *Land Speed Record*. In spite of Spot's characteristically cheap production, these new songs could go up against anything on the radio and blow it away. If you like any of the Clash, Sex Pistols, R.E.M., Elvis Costello, Ramones, Replacements, or True West, you'll like this record. And if you like them all, you'll love this.

—John Leland



"That's our problem, Charlie—the more we get, the more we want."

UNDERGROUND

Edited by Andrea 'Enthal

In the beginning came rock 'n' roll, and the powers that be gave it a six because the kids seemed to like it and you could dance to it, and the world was never the same again. Whenever the rock 'n' roll monster got boring, fire-breathing revolutionaries arrived, smashing apart convention and creating a fresh movement. It was called psychedelia in 1967, and in the mid-'70s the same smash-'em-up spirit surfaced as punk rock. The kids didn't call themselves punks, for them there was just the underground. Though it may be hard to find sometimes, the underground never goes away. You can hear glimmers of it on the air from small-wattage radio stations on the low end of the FM dial, in import record stores in urban enclaves and in small college towns. This column is dedicated to all of you who thought the musical revolution was dead and to those just discovering the revolutions of the past, because the spirit still flourishes, as always, underground.

Start with psychedelia. By that I don't mean the paltry, paisley revivalists recreating sanitized mid-'60s sounds sans psychosis. Psychedelia was about altered states, both chemically and socially induced, and the San Francisco band German Shepherds have created a psycho-dilly with their comic confessional, "THC." Over a track of simulated backward Satanic messages and synthesizers made to sound like geese torturing water balloons, a former hippie, now born-again Christian, confesses his wayward ways. Rock 'n' roll turned his mind and breath to sewage but now he's seen the holy sign, thanks to divine intervention and THC. If you want to buy this album write: P.O. Box 590-181, San Francisco, CA 94159.

Just as altered, but without any synthesized or chemically induced additives, is Turkey Bones and the Wild Dogs, whose paranoid dementia leads to murder on the EP *Purple Noise Sandwich*. "Raymond," opens with 51 seconds of scuffling and screaming that turns into a shimmering calm.

"Raymond," a deep-voiced singing narrator repeatedly nags, "where did you put your knife?" Turns out, in Raymond's wife. "I tried everything in the book to bring you up the way that I should. You'll probably spend your life behind bars, but it's better than spending all your time with me," the stepfather intones in threatening cold deadpan. Ray comes to agree with the guy. He not only tells him where the knife is, he shows him. Alfred Hitchcock would have been proud. As for dad, he deserved it. Contact Jungle Records, 24 Gaskin St., London N1, England, for the 12-inch 45 from McKechnie Records.

With an instrumental passage somewhere between an 1850s riverboat

churning, a Negro spiritual, and a drunk tuba player, Danielle Dax's recently released album, *Jesus Egg That Wept*, is one of the most mind-warping slices of black vinyl to ooze off a record press. "Up in the Big House they branding niggers/Home on the range/Wake up it's done," she sings in a style inspired by old jazz vocalists on scratchy 78s. Though more abstract than, say, Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit," (a Depression-era ballad in which the rotting corpse of an innocent Southern black man is found dangling from the branches of a tree), Dax's impressionistic visions of bygone Americana are just as powerful in creating their collection of nightmare images out of borrowed pop idioms and mutant shooby-dobies. Add to that her pure, clear singing and you have an album so sweetly innocent it turns the very definition of evil upside down. Truly great stuff. Available from Zed Records, 1940 Lakewood Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90815.

On a lighter but just as warped note, Very Things has created an enticing metaphysical novelty song, "The Bushes Scream While My Daddy Prunes." With a singsong vocal style reminiscent of Boris Pickett's "Monster Mash," and music a kissing-cousin-once-removed from the Munsters' theme, "Bushes" burbles along like a gothic B-movie gone awry. We don't get to hear the bushes actually screaming, just kind of blowing vacantly in the wind, as Pa, who seems to be somewhat lobotomized, mumbles sweet-and-jolly num-nums while he hacks away. Definitely not a record to play within leaf-shot of your green plants. They might get ideas. Available from Reflex Records, 3 Adelaide House, 21 Wells Road, Malvern, Worcs., England.

Zany Guys, from Phoenix, Arizona, is also 1999 pounds of fun on their seven-inch EP *Party Hits Volume II*. The Guys' forte is fast, loud, and snotty thrash, served with dollops of humor, and bull's-eye satirical accuracy. "Hardcore" is a snarly send-up of cowpunks and urban cowboys. "I don't like Box Car Willie, Slim Whitman leaves me blue, and Dolly, she don't excite me, and I don't give a fuck for that chew," the Guys sing in their slowest and best country bar-band imitation before breaking into the breakneck tempo and searing speed of hardcore punk rock. Just send check or money-order for \$2.50 to Placebo Records, P.O. Box 23316, Phoenix, AZ 85063.

Not For Sale, a trio from Austin, Texas, creates melodic yet high-speed tunes that fuse pop harmonies with Howard Burke's fuzz-edged guitar work—as if Elvis Cos-

tello suddenly found himself one of the Ramones. On their three-song, seven-inch EP, *A Few Dollars More*, the pop punkers sing and chant quite catchily about hate and government, but there are enough hooks to snag the ears of anyone who thinks punk-rockers only scream about hate and government. Sort of an amalgamation of '60s folkies and '70s punkers with overtones of The Clash and Pete Townsend.

You probably haven't seen Not For Sale, unless you live in Texas. You have heard them if you bought *Cottage Cheese from the Lips of Death*, a compilation of hardcore Texas groups. Burke says their track on the album is the best thing the band has ever done. For a real thrill, try catching their live show at Liberty Lunch in Austin. No, wait—which is to say don't wait—buy their records! These guys are doing it for love, not money! Howard mows lawns by day, Mike, the bass-player, repairs cars, and Scott, the drummer, works in a frame shop. If you are intrigued (and who isn't at least intrigued) by folk-rock, hardcore pop-punk, send \$3.00 for the EP to Rabid Records, P.O. Box 49263, Austin, TX 78765. The compilation LP is available from Ward-9 Records, 3014 Broadway, San Antonio, TX 78209.

The fertile urban plains of Texas also sprouted Butthole Surfers, a multi-fused bundle of napalm, poised to attack anything or anyone. Though their humor sometimes descends into the kind of adolescent scatology their name implies, it's difficult not to be enchanted by a band whose song titles include "Bar-B-Q Pope," and "Witchita Cathedral." It's just as hard to stop laughing when they shout "I smoke Elvis Presley's toenails when I want to get high." More squirrely than a

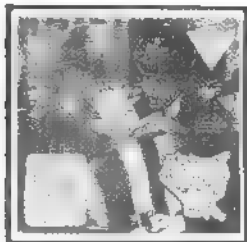




spaghetti-Western theme played at 78, the Buttholes bring strange screeches and vocal squalls to their loud, fast sounds. Their sparse, proletarian choruses such as "I ate some cheese and rice today," indicate Zen and Hegelian roots deeply influenced by Scientology, Freud, and the Khmer Rouge (pro-Vietnamese school).

They're better live than on either of their albums, but if you can't get to see them, the Alternative Tentacles' label EPs, *Live PCP Pep*, or the studio version, *A Brown Reason to Live*, or their single song on the *Cottage Cheese* from the *Lips of Death* album, give you at least half an idea of what they're like. Connect with Alternative Tentacles Records (home of the equally infamous Dead Kennedys) at P.O. Box 11458, San Francisco, CA 94101. Also Touch and Go Records of Dearborn, MI, has just released *Psychic*, *Powerless*, *Another Mans Sac*, the group's first full-length album.

Chaos UK's *Short Sharp Shock LP* ■ ■ surprisingly progressive slab of spike-head vinyl. One side of the album is generic metalpunk, featuring grinding (low-notes-only) guitar excesses. The surprise is on the other side where a snippet of classical piano, ■ surf-beat, and sound effects are



"Come throw yourself under the monstrous wheels of the rock and roll bandwagon as it approaches destruction."
The Juggernauts

added behind the band's pounding, indecipherable grumble-slur lyricism. Most mind-mashing is "Barnyard Boogie," a throbbing monster of a track with drunk, chanting farmhands, chickens, cows, Jamaican dub inserts, metal-din chords, and a clippety-clopping dance beat, fast enough to give any fool trying to dance to it deserved heart seizure. The main connection for this album (a mere £3 or \$4.37) is *Children of the Revolution*, Box 333, Full Marks Bookshop, 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol, England.

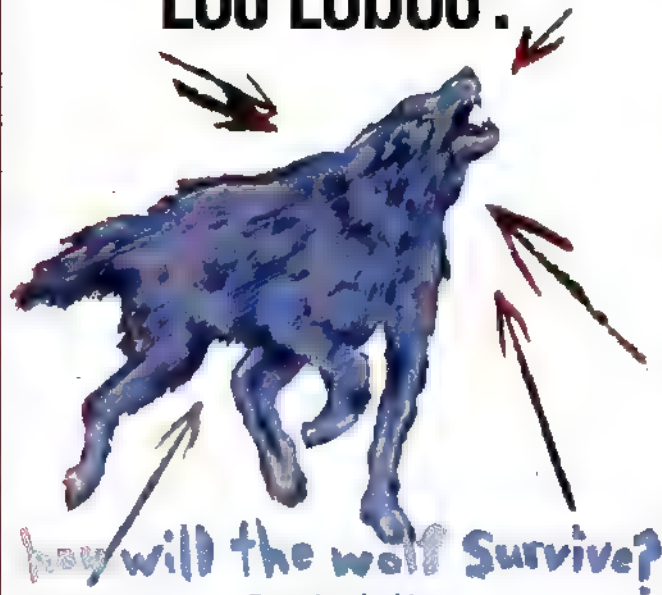
Which brings up the deathly pessimistic yet joyful sounds of the Juggernaut's "Come Throw Yourself Under the Monstrous Wheels of the Rock and Roll Bandwagon as it Approaches Destruction," a perky rockabilly ditty with a beat borrowed from a great big circus drum and a jangly guitar supplemented with a big ol' rubber band.

"I used to think I didn't know where it's at, but I got a taste of the great big world and now I'm not so certain," sings our hero in the mindless lilt he uses to disguise the bitter reality of his life. "Come give yourself to the rock machine. It needs a few more new dead souls for internal combustion." Amen. This seven-inch single is available from Supreme International Editions, 20 Howe St., Edinburgh, Scotland.

Scraping Foetus Off the Wheel has created ■ loud, clear, even danceable album. On *Hole*, the last surfer in Hell takes ■ Beach Boys-inspired trip down "Satan Place" when he gleefully blows his brains out, complete with the little giggling Sur-fari voice shouting "Wipe-out!" when the deed is done. Adolf Hitler furnishes lead vocals on "I'll Meet You in Poland Baby," a creepy reverb-drowned induction into the Nazi army of September 1, 1939 (the day Germany invaded Poland), as feedback bombs and goosestepping percussion beats back a sieg-heiling collection of Brave New Reichlanders cheering on the great Fuhrer. Should your green plants accidentally overhear "The Bushes Scream," play them this. They'll wilt on the spot. You might too. *Hole* is 12 inspired looks into a Twilight Zone of sheer dementia. This import album can be obtained from Zed Records in Long Beach, CA, or Wax Trax in Chicago.

If you would like to know more about these records, the labels, the names of stores in your area that sell underground rock and the distributors that sell these records to stores, send a stamped and self-addressed envelope to: *Underground*, Andrea 'Enthal, SPIN, 1965 Broadway, NY, NY 10023.

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—Los Angeles Times

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FELA

REBEL ON ICE

The King of Afrobeat enjoyed a reign of sex, hemp, jazz and rock 'n' roll—then the empire struck back, trumping up charges to cool his revolutionary fires. —

Article by
Randall Grass

During the early '70s, when album jackets reached new heights of audacity, one cover stood out: behind barbed wire stood a bevy of bare-breasted young women, their hands raised in clenched-fist salutes. In the middle of them, a man, wearing only bikini briefs, also raised a fist. Everyone was grinning. The album title? *Expensive Shit*.

That man is Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, inventor of Afrobeat, champion of oppressed Africans, exemplar of a notorious sex-and-dope lifestyle and the heir to Bob Marley's still-unclaimed crown as Third World superstar. Like reggae, Fela's Afrobeat is primo politics-yu-can-dance-to, but where Marley made hymns about "burnin' and lootin'," Fela exposes the evildoers with a relentless, sarcastic chant. Marley has had some credible imitators (Steel Pulse, for one) but Fela's Afrobeat remains Fela's alone—the sound and fury of his life.

Fela has put a rebellious rock 'n' roll sensibility into an African context. In Africa, though, the stakes for rebels are high. Fela wasn't just projecting an image as rebel—he named names. Last October, some of those named hit back. On the eve of his first major tour to America, Fela was arrested, charged with trying to export illegally 1600 British pounds (\$1800)—a subversive act under Nigerian decrees—and was sentenced to five years in jail. Fela is really in jail because he insulted too many people, spoke too many truths, grew a little too popular and exhibited too much . . . "indiscipline," as the military government phrases it.

Maybe part of the problem is that Fela came of age during Nigeria's struggle with the twin spectres of colonial suffocation and impossibly romantic notions of independence. Nigeria's fledgling steps in the '60s as a newly independent nation led it right into an explosion of development accelerated by sudden wealth from massive oil discoveries. The country's leaders already had their hands full dealing with 70 million ethnically diverse Muslims, Christians, and animists speaking 200 different languages in a shadowy world, with only a laughably alien colonial blueprint as a guide. Suddenly, they found themselves flooded by petro-dollars, foreign exports, and randomly imported technology. To paraphrase Dickens, it was the best of times, and therefore it was the worst of times. Politicians and civil servants, already steeped in certain African customs which the cynics amongst us call corruption, could rarely resist filling their pockets.

Disloyal to Nigeria, you say? What was Nigeria anyway but a notion of convenience dreamed up by Europeans less than 100 years ago? What is Lagos, Nigeria's bizarre capital, but the festering, topsy-turvy mutation of a colonial outpost, jerry-rigged over swampy lagoons to accommodate the plunderers' ships—never meant to be a city at all. "It's just like New York," a Nigerian would tell an American friend, meaning Lagos has tall buildings, night clubs, expressways, traffic jams, and mercantile hustle-bustle. But the telephones don't work, a simple drive across town might take hours, and everyone's hand is out. As a city it is virtually non-functional, but millions of Nigerians, seeing only a Hollywood vision of urban paradise, flocked there anyway.

Fela was one of them. He'd grown up middle-class in Abeokuta, a tranquil Yoruba town a couple of hours up the road where life was still what it had always been. His father was a prominent minister/educator who ran a school with iron discipline and generally embodied the hopes of Europeans that an African, given sufficient doses of Christianity and West-is-best education, would become civilized. His mother, on the other hand, was a fiery activist who fought the worst absurdities of colonialism with unflagging zeal.

As founder of the Nigerian Women's Union, she won her case against taxation by engineering the abdication of a local puppet-chief when she led thousands of women to a sit-in at his house. (Incidentally, she became the first Nigerian woman to drive a car and the first to visit the People's Republic of China, where she met Mao Zedong. An intimate of President Nkrumah, she once took Fela along when visiting him on his yacht.)

Fela's father tried to bring him up as a good colonial boy, but Fela inherited his mother's spirit, which got him into frequent trouble. "Between my mother and my father, I got 3000 strokes between the ages of nine and 17. That's not counting the beatings I got from my teachers," he recalled.

Only music could capture his undivided attention and so, at age 19, he was sent to London to study at the Trinity College of Music. Fela went through the motions with music theory and classical training, but soon was skipping classes to hang out and party on the London jazz scene, where he found plenty of inspiration for his main axe—the sax. When he returned to Lagos in 1963, Fela made only token efforts to hold a job at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation before quitting in form

a band. He never held a straight job again.

Fela in those days was playing a *kind of* jazz, inflected by African rhythms, but imbued with heavy jazz solos. Lagos party people didn't want to hear it; they were too busy dancing to the slinky juju of I.K. Dairo and other Sunny Ade inspirations or the hot, high-life romps of Victor Olaiya and maybe doing the Twist to records from the Promised Land. Fela's uncompromising devotion to jazz might have doomed him to obscurity, but for the intervention of a financial angel who, in 1969, sent Fela's Koola Lobitos band to America—Los Angeles, to be exact. America blew Fela's mind.

America's vaulted superhighways, electronic marvels, and choreographed money-hustle made Fela feel small. It made Lagos' pitiful imitation seem like a bad joke . . . and Fela felt uncharacteristically humble as his band starved while he tried to hustle gigs. Then he met Sandra Isidore. A Black Nationalist who regularly clashed with police in street demonstrations, steeped in pan-African literature and longing to go to the Motherland, Isidore was ready to worship an authentic African musician like Fela. She fed, clothed and housed him, loved him and gave him *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* to read. It was the first book Fela had read in years, and it gave him an immediate vision of what Africa—and African music—should be. He sat down at the piano and composed a song, based on African rhythms and a chant-like approach to singing—Afrobeat was born.

Ultimately, Fela's inability to penetrate the union-controlled American club scene forced him to take his band back to Nigeria, though not before they played a long and successful run at Citadel de Hiati, an "in" haunt of black entertainers.

Fela hit Lagos like a missile from the future, fired by a revolutionary vision of African culture. He renamed his band Africa 70 and played his new music at his own Afro-Spot club. Almost immediately, he began making records. One of the first, "Chop and Quench (Eat and Die)," became a best-seller and established his new sound of chopping, James Brown-style guitar funk, pulsating multi-percussion, chant-like vocals, an answering chorus of blaring horns and lots of swirling free-form horn and keyboard solos. Sometimes he sang in Yoruba, but more often he sang in pidgin English, the *lingua franca* of Nigerian urbanites. Early on, he made his political priorities clear: hits like "Buy Africa," "Gentleman," "Don't Gag Me," "Confusion," and "Trouble Sleep" celebrated African culture, mocked would-be westernized Africans and condemned agents of European neo-colonialism profiting from African oppression. The LP jackets, with their garish cartoons and uncensored photos of Fela and his followers, told the story. *Gentleman's* jacket, for instance, features a drawing of an ape attired in a business suit. The lyrics mocked Europeanized Africans: "Them call you, make you come chop (eat)/You chop small, you say you belly full/You say you be gentleman—you go hungry/You go suffer/You go die/I no be gentleman like that."

If Fela had merely sung generalized songs of protest, he might have been safe. But he singlehandedly brought the '60s cultural revolution to Africa. He converted his Lagos house into a commune for his entire Africa 70 organization, and dozens of young people who flocked to Fela found that if their rap was good enough, they could join Africa 70, have a place to live and get pocket money to boot. Soon newspapers and magazines bloomed with lurid photos of Fela strolling in his yard, wearing only his shorts and playing his saxophone, bare-breasted young beauties by the score lolling about. Groups of "Fela's boys" cockily roamed the streets, daring anyone to cross them. Kalakuta Republic (as he named his house) became a liberated zone within Nigerian society.

Fela's club, renamed the Shrine, was also a liberated zone, but a far more dangerous one as far as the government was concerned, because it was open to the public. An open-air dance area was always thronged with dancers, gawkers and would-be cool cats; teenage



Courtesy Caluloid Records

*"You say you
be gentleman—you go
hungry/you go
suffer/you go die/I no be
gentleman like that."*

girls wriggled on raised platforms. The walls were lined with flags from all African nations, Fela's icons of pan-Africanism. Onstage, he prowled, a restless panther, preaching, singing, blowing, cursing. Some shows began with a libation and invocation to the gods; it was not entertainment alone but communal experience. Dialogue, magic, prayers, dancing and singing all played a part, held together by the throbbing, bass-heavy Afrobeat pulse. Ten or 20 minutes of riffing would build to an early climax, then Fela would speak, chant or sing, as the horns or female chorus answered him. And so on, into the dawn. But then the arrests began.

Nigeria's police, accustomed to enforcing orders with blows from their whips, clashed often with "Fela's boys." They began arresting Fela for hemp possession, especially anytime he hit the road to play a date. Released in 1971, *Expensive Shit* memorialized one of these imprisonments; the police held Fela to examine his excrement for traces of hemp which he had abruptly swallowed as he was arrested. The courts kept releasing him because of lack of evidence and because his mother, still influential in political circles, pulled strings to free him. But Fela wouldn't let up. Increasingly, his lyrics attacked the military government's brutality and corruption. "Zombie" savaged the military mentality, "Upsideown" exposed the inefficiency of government agencies and "Johnny Just Drop" mocked bourgeois Nigerians.

The LP jacket illustrations got wilder, sometimes depicting goon-like policemen clubbing fearful civilians. Fela's personal brand of African authenticity was typified in filmmaker Jeremy Marre's 1978 African-music documentary *Konkombe*. In the film, Fela sits in a sparsely furnished room, holding court among his lounging followers (with Fela there were always many people), thick clouds of smoke emanating from huge spliffs. Draped around like so many languid hothouse flowers are several of Fela's "queens," resplendent in multi-color wraps, bangles, and beads dripping from their bodies, their faces fantastic masks of makeup. In

their midst is Fela, clad only, as usual, in briefs, his saxophone strap hanging ready from his neck. As his queens listen with disinterested deference, Fela outlines his credo.

"Yes, if you're in England," he says in clipped tones, "you sing of enjoyment. You sing of love or . . . who you're going to bed with *next*? But my society is underdeveloping because of an alien system on my people. So there's no music for enjoyment, for love, when there's such a struggle for people's existence. So, as an artist, politically, artistically, my whole idea about my environment must be represented in the music, in the arts. So art is what's happening in a particular time of people's development or underdevelopment. Music must awaken the people to do their duty as citizens and act. If you see something bad, do something about it."

"I see Africa today . . . (he pauses to light a spliff) . . . what we do is we suffer with smiles (here he caricatures a foolishly ingratiating African with a mask-like grin, saying, 'heh, heh . . . how are you?' Then his mouth collapses into a no-nonsense line). We smile because we are a good people, probably, but people don't have to smile in a bad condition. That is making matters worse. It makes us into slaves. So I wrote a tune called 'Suffering and Smiling.'"

He picks up his alto sax and blows a snatch of minor-key, singsong melody, then sings: "Suffer, suffer, suffer, suffer for world . . . no your fault be that!" As he sings, he rocks slightly from side to side in time, his eyes twinkling with devilish humor.

Such blatant anti-social tendencies have been an anathema in Africa. Other Nigerians womanize, smoke hemp, and criticize the government, but they are circumspect. For Fela there was no distinction between public and private life. But worse still, it seemed as though he might do more than just talk about political change. He intimated to acquaintances that he was considering running for president; he formed a youth-action group and allied himself with vaguely left-leaning, would-be politicians. Some people felt that Fela was trying to set Kalakuta Republic up as an independent nation.

In 1977, the roof fell in. One of Fela's boys clashed with soldiers, and fled to the Kalakuta compound. Soldiers surrounded the house, demanding that Fela hand over the man. When he refused, the soldiers charged, and Fela threw on the juice, charging the electrified fence encircling the compound; the soldiers fell back. Suddenly the power supply was cut off and soldiers poured onto the grounds, beating, arresting, smashing, raping, finally setting fire to the house in an orgy of retribution. In the melee, Fela's mother was thrown out a window, breaking her leg. She died shortly afterward. Defiantly, Fela took her body to the barracks quarters of Head of State Olusegun Obasanjo. Soon, he produced *Coffin For Head of State*, an LP that vilified Obasanjo, its jacket depicting the procession to his quarters.

The Kalakuta attack nearly destroyed Fela, who was imprisoned. The Shrine was closed, Kalakuta burned to the ground, his master tapes and musical equipment destroyed. The Africa 70 organization was shattered.

When Fela was released from jail with all charges against him dropped, he sued the government. An inquiry blamed an "unknown soldier" for the Kalakuta destruction. Fela went into self-imposed exile in Ghana to lick his wounds. Two years later he returned to pick up the pieces. He opened a new Shrine on the outskirts of Lagos. In gratitude for the courage of his female Africa 70 members, he married 27 of them in one day in a ceremony that provoked more headlines.

The government stepped up the pressure. "They beat him to his knees, then they beat him on his knees," said Sandra Isidore. "They only allowed the Shrine to stay open because it is a shrine, not a club. But the government published notices stating that anyone who went there went at their own risk."

Fela seemed down and maybe out when another angel arrived from abroad. French producer Martin Meissonnier struck a deal with Arista Records in Europe to release Fela's *Black President* and *Original Sufferhead*

LPs and brought him to Europe for a few celebrated shows. But a second tour ended in financial disaster. Fela and Meissonnier parted ways bitterly. Meissonnier then masterminded Sunny Ade's assault on America while Fela, penniless and dispirited, watched from Africa. Miraculously, two Frenchmen, Pascal Imbert and Francie Kertekian, got Fela re-signed to his old label, EMI, and organized another European tour with a series of dates projected for America. Anticipation ran high that Fela, amid an African-music boom, would reclaim his place as the king of African pop.

Fela, with characteristic determination, featured mainly new material as he led his Egypt 80 band to Paris, London, and Amsterdam. He again paced the stage during the shows, but now his declamations were long-winded and meandering. A perfectionist, on several occasions he would stop in the middle of numbers to harangue band members or technicians for flaws in the sound. As always, Fela presented himself warts and all. Many long-time fans found the shows musically strong and exciting, but others, expecting a slick, pre-packaged show, were disappointed. EMI unwisely released a meandering *Live in Amsterdam* LP (and reissued the two Arista LPs in Europe and America) instead of releasing his new studio effort, *Perambulator*, a tough, fast-paced romp that had his old fire.

Still, Fela was back on the scene and rumors began flying around the States as dates were booked in New York, Los Angeles (with Peter Tosh and Mighty Sparrow) and San Francisco—his first American dates in over 15 years. The prophet was finally coming.

On Tuesday, September 4, 1984, Fela and 40 members of his troupe arrived at Murtala Muhammad Airport for the night flight to New York. Ali was proceeding smoothly when Fela, the last to check in, was accosted by a customs agent who, Fela said, asked him for a "tip" of 20 Naira (about \$20), which Fela was unable to pay since all his Nigerian money was at home. Through customs and immigrations checkpoints, Fela was again approached by the same official, who summarily searched him and demanded to know if Fela had declared the \$1800 in British currency he found. Fela stated that he had, but the official took him to an office for questioning anyway. In the confused events that followed, Fela's currency-declaration form disappeared. Fela was detained and the flight left with his band, Fela intending to catch the next flight.

Instead, Fela was charged with two counts of illegal currency exportation, and imprisoned for two days. On Saturday, September 8, Fela called a press conference at his home to argue that he should be allowed to leave the country for his tour and stand trial on his return. But police broke up the proceeding and arrested him again; this time there was no bail.

In California, Fela's band anxiously waited for him as dates were constantly pushed back. Finally, the decision was made to play the tour without him. The band, led by Fela's son Femi, who had been playing saxophone with the group for some time, brought a somewhat ragged, pale version of Fela's music to audiences in the three cities scheduled.

Meanwhile, in Lagos, Fela's Kafkaesque trial began on September 20. His lawyer submitted a "no case to answer" motion on several procedural grounds, stating that the prosecution had not followed proper procedures and had produced no documentary evidence (especially Fela's currency form). But the court ruled that there was a case to answer. Fela's defense rested on several key points: 1) evidence that the money had been withdrawn from Fela's bank in London four days before his arrest; 2) evidence that it was impossible for anyone to pass the first customs checkpoint without filling out a currency form (even if he had nothing to declare); and 3) the failure of the government to produce Fela's currency form which would indicate if he had declared the money. Last October 8, three weeks after the start of the trial, Fela was found guilty on both counts and sentenced to five years imprisonment on each (running concurrently). He was also fined 2000 Naira and forfeited the seized \$1800.

A photo in a Lagos newspaper the next day seems



In an orgy of revenge, Nigerian police raided Fela's compound and burned his home, raped the women, destroyed his recording studio and valuable tapes and threw his mother from a window. She later died from her injuries.

destined for a future Fela LP jacket; it showed Fela flanked by three grim soldiers escorting him to jail. He was smiling as though recalling an old joke, but one can't help think that this time Fela has finally been muffled. In jail he has been reported to be in good spirits. Initially in a large cell with other prisoners—many of whom revered him—he was soon transferred to a private cell, then to a prison hospital, sparking hope that the authorities were softening on his conviction.

Shortly after Fela's imprisonment, EMI cancelled his recording contract. "The American promotion department of EMI told me that since Fela was in jail, they weren't interested in spending money to support his records or the tour," said Pascal Imbert. This brought to an end the long, bitter relationship between EMI and Fela, who had been exceedingly critical of the company's inability to promote his albums and him as a superstar. There were also disputes over royalties. Fela had accused EMI of holding up his profits and took the company to court, winning a settlement. Some people suggested that EMI's dumping the *Live in Amsterdam* LP onto the market was deliberate sabotaging of Fela's work; and that cancellation of the contract was simply the other shoe falling.

Fela has had a volatile history with his record labels. During a feud with Decca he brought a dozen of his wives to the label's offices and simply entrenched himself and entourage until the matter was cleared up. Three of the wives gave birth on the premises during the occupation!

His arrest and conviction occurred on the eve of perhaps Fela's greatest success. People had begun to ask if perhaps Fela's time was past. Some argued that rev-



olutionary politics were now out of fashion. A neo-conservative mood has ascended in the West while the Third World, in hock to Western banks, has made humiliating accommodations with the status quo. In the past 10 years Fela's sound had not changed very much. Though the rhythm packed as much punch as ever, Fela's refusal to integrate electronics into his music dated his sound when compared to the brave new world of synthesizers and beat boxes. Suddenly, his blaring horn section, brace of chugging guitars and moody electronic piano or organ began to sound quaint. Then he produced his current LP, *Army Arrangement*.

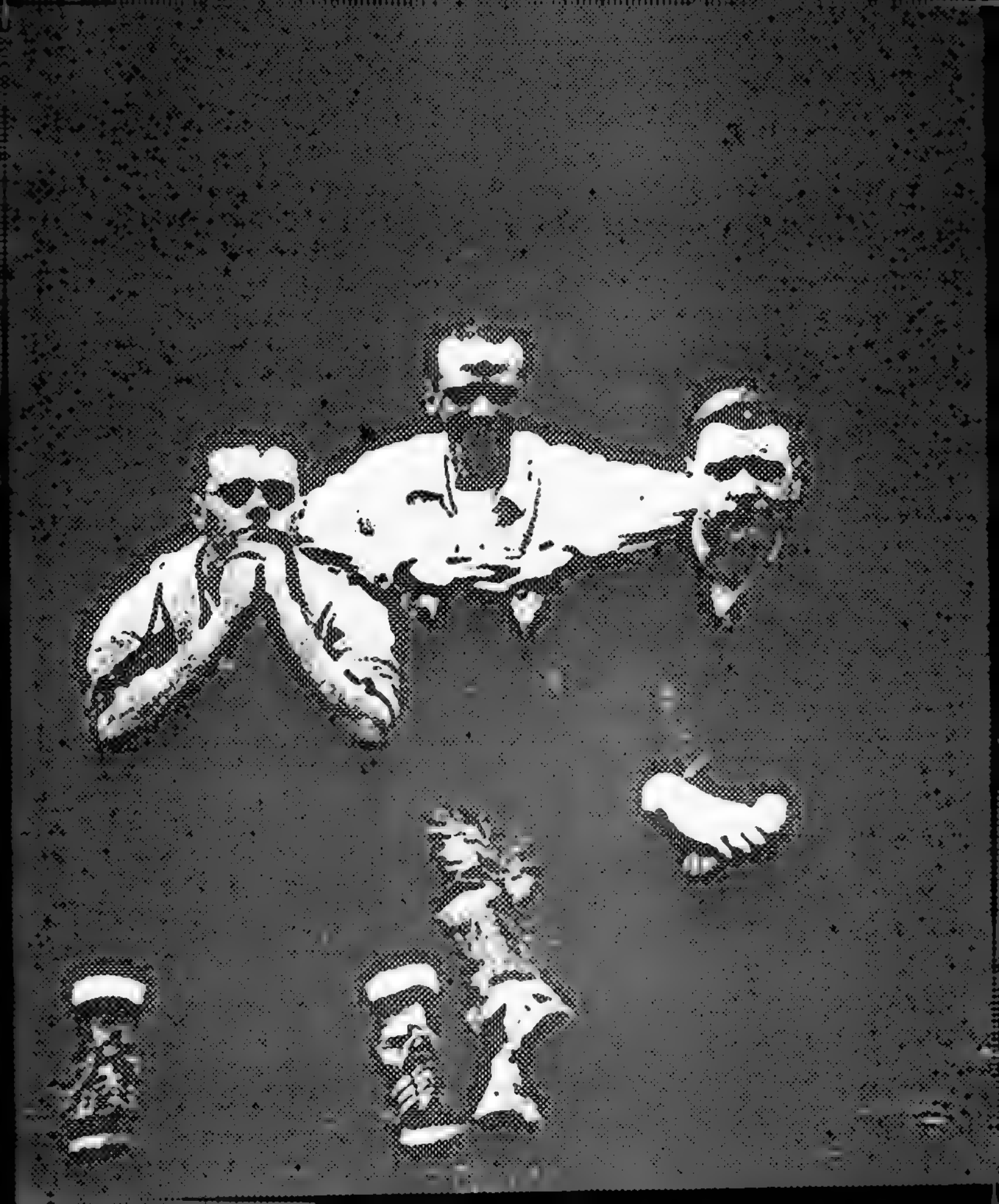
On *Army Arrangement* Fela uses electronic wizard Bill Laswell (of Material), former Parliament-Funkateer Bernie Worrell and rhythm-meister Sly Dunbar to give his music a contemporary synthesized gloss, without draining its vitality. On the opening cut "Cross Examination," a kick-ass rhythm is stiffened just enough by discreet electronic over-dubs, coloring a blistering indictment of Nigeria's military rulers, delivered by Fela in English. Pulling no punches, Fela recounts how the army once acted as agents of colonialism and relates past treachery to present folly in the blunt proclamation: "You are guilty!" On "Government Chicken Boy" and the title track, his Egypt 80 band tightens the beat into punkish belligerence, befitting Fela's confrontational declamations.

But Fela's musical indictments of corruption and exploitation are more acute than his political proposals. His vision of a new African society lacks detail and his relegation of women to a subordinate, domestic role seems, at best, reactionary. Some fear that his increasing reliance on Yoruba mysticism and the wizardry of his spiritual guru Professor Hindu are signs that his suffering has bent his mind.

Perhaps if he'd been a little less caustic, a little less personal, he would not have been arrested on the eve of his greatest triumph and convicted on flimsy evidence. But Fela has never substituted subtlety for directness. And he's incapable of half-stepping. He cannot bear to allow the politicians to tell lies in peace. Even when living in exile in Ghana, he had invited deportation by challenging Lebanese shopowners who abused African women vendors and openly rallied students against the Ghanaian military regime.

"When I see a policeman beating up somebody," he told Carlos Moore in *Fela Fela—This Bitch of a Life*, his 1982 biography, "A government man committing

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WHAT IS BRONSKI BEAT?

Three shy, openly gay and wonderfully gifted young men from England give their first American interview.

Article by Barney Hoskyns

Meet what is perhaps the first real gay group in the history of pop. They're not drag queens, they're not Village People clones, and they're not even sure they want to be pop stars. All in all, they'd probably be happier doing community work in a London slum.

Meet Bronski Beat, two Glaswegians and a bespectacled boy from Southend, England, who feel that the much-vaunted explosion of gender-bending in British pop is really the old story of pervers being acceptable as long as they're dolled up to the nines and making fan-nies of themselves. Boy George is OK because he has become a big cuddly empress, a larger-than-life Tinkerbelle matriarch. Not OK, however, are men who look as casually masculine as your average American rock punter singing about the passion and oppression of homosexuals. That confuses the issue, melts barriers, bewilders.

That Britain has taken the trio to its fickle, teenybop heart is a welcome extension of native tolerance. In this climate of synthesized wind and iced-soul vacuity, their electro-pop rhapsodies stand out a mile, suggesting the Sylvester of "I Need Somebody to Love Tonight" superimposed on the Depeche Mode of "Just Can't Get Enough." To hear tiny Jimi Somerville's achingly pure counter-tenor over the dry, careful constructions of Steve Bronski and Larry Steinbachek is to feel a whole pent-up adolescence of pain and frustration finding its first release.

What, one wonders, will America make of them, of the militant heartache of "Why" and "Screaming" or the steamy pre-AIDS libido of "Heatwave" and "Need a Man Blues"? Already college stations have returned copies of their debut album, *Age of Consent* (MCA), upon discovering that it listed the minimum legal ages for homosexual relations in Europe.

"What's all this faggot stuff?" mimics Larry with an acid smile.

They're entering the land of Donna Summer and they know it. A fine irony was their recording of "I Feel Love" just prior to Summer's turning against the gay community that made her a star. Recently, Bronski Beat re-recorded the song as a duet with Marc Almond, late of Soft Cell.

"We've only been to New York in America before this," admits Jimi, "and New York isn't really a fair representation of America, just like London isn't a fair representation of Britain. So we don't really know what we're in for. That's what's exciting and frightening."

"But nobody knew what was going to happen here, in the UK, or in Europe," adds Steve. "For the sort of band we are, it was just unheard of, really. I mean,

we've crossed over into the pop market. Children buy our records."

"There's been quite a lot of good response from certain places in America," continues Jimi. "Especially from lefties, because we question things like fascism and nuclear war and patriotism, and they see us as something good. We're quite adamant as well, we've never backed down on anything. America is not gonna be able to hit us w/ anything people don't already know or that we haven't already admitted."

Bronski Beat formed when three small-town boys came together on the making of the video documentary called *Framed Youth: Revenge of the Teenage Perverts*. Larry heard Jimi singing an unaccompanied "Screaming" and proposed a musical collaboration.

"The idea was never, 'Let's have a band.' It was just 'Let's do some music together.' It was only the opportunity to perform that turned us into a band."

"I just did it because I wasn't doing anything else," confesses Jimi. "I'd never wanted to be in a band and I'd never wanted to sing. I was just unemployed and it was something to do in my spare time." He jokes that the only vocal training he ever had was singing along to Sylvester and Donna Summer records.

"The idea at first was to be a video synth band and use video's live," says Steve. "We got together for a gay arts festival called September in the Pink, and at first it was just for fun. Then we got asked to do more and more things."

Why the move from Glasgow in the first place?

"As far as I was concerned, I wanted a lot more out of life than working in a paint factory and having to accept that being gay was a nighttime occupation only," says Jimi. "During the day you didn't exist... Edinburgh is quite good because it has a gay center, but there's only one small gay paper, *Gay Scotland*, which comes out every fortnight. I dunno, I just had had enough of the abuse and the heartache. I wanted more out of life, and I knew there was definitely more to get."

This is the story of the single, "Smalltown Boy," and one as applicable to the American gay scene as any other. It's a very simple and intensely moving song that suggests perfectly the scared flight from "normal" life, and it has brought Jimi his share of heartfelt fan mail.

"Most of my friends have been through the same situation," he says. "Most gay people in London don't come from London, the majority come from all over the country. London is still the best place to find some kind of identity."

Jimi's lyrics have done for numerous confused teenage boys what Tom Robinson did seven years ago for Jimi: offered some hope and identity. Maybe some of them will be spared the suicides Jimi attempted when he was 15.

Bronski Beat doesn't want to overplay the gay card, of course. They'd rather not be categorized by a heterosexual majority before their music has been heard. Partly to this end, they refused to give any other American press interviews, citing fear that the whole gay issue would be blown out of context and subject them to prejudice. Certainly, the music they will play in America won't be simply throbbing Boystown disco.

"Junk" is almost, like, rock," says Jimi. "I think it shows that we're not restricted to a soft, electronic, soul thing. We can actually get quite aggressive and heavy."

They plan to do benefits for gay activists, but don't wish to preach to the converted alone. Says Jimi: "It's just that you can't sort of pounce on people with all these ideals, as if to say, we're definitely right and you'd better listen. You've got to be subtle when you approach people—human beings are sensitive."

"And after all, there is more to life than just sex. It's inevitable that our music comes from a gay point of view, but then, some things come across from a woman's point of view or a straight man's point of view or a black's point of view."

"If you think about it," adds Steve, "there are so many gay musicians, artists, etc.—there always have been—why haven't people asked them about it?"

Having dispensed with camp trimmings, Bronski re-

sents being thrown in with the likes of Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

"We get categorized along with Frankie just because we're another pop band," says Jimi. "But we're not just another pop band. We each have different reasons for doing what we're doing. My reasons for doing this at the moment are purely political, Larry's doing it because he wants to be a producer, and Steve just likes playing music. Everything about Frankie is marketing and publicity. They've never done anything that was progressive, only things that were 'outrageous.' Now it's like, they're so tame, they're like another Wham!"

Given the connection between gay culture and uniform disco Muzak, another danger is being typecast as just a dance band.

"When we did our early gigs," says Larry, "most of the stuff we did was orientated towards people having a good time, whether you want to call that dance, disco, or whatever. I think we've expanded musically and creatively since then."

Have there been any developments in electro-pop since Soft Cell split?

"I think musically it's moved with the times, i.e., with technology. Electro-pop records have become more acceptable to radio audiences. The technology has become that much more advanced, so that you haven't got your usual cold synth sound, you've got warm synth sounds and touch-sensitive keys. The instruments have become more emotional to play."

Would they ever do anything as straightforwardly Hi-Energy as New Order's "Blue Monday," which was a big record here?

"I suppose 'Close to the Edge' was verging on that," says Jimi, "but w/ us it always ends up being more individual."

"Hi-Energy has become very formulated since 'Blue Monday'," adds Larry, "and we do try to steer clear of formulated music. Even if we planned it, I don't think it would end up sounding the same. 'Why' was planned as a dance record, but it doesn't sound like Hi-Energy."

"It's more over-the-top than a Hi-Energy song, because it's much more demanding and dramatic," says Jimi.

Until the world can accept Gore Vidal's premise that, "what makes some people prefer same-sex sex derives from whatever impulse or conditioning makes some people prefer other-sex sex," Bronski Beat's demanding and dramatic music will remain a vital force for change.



Photography by Peter Anderson

She's a shiny heavenly body, a seductive look and a sexy voice. She's sleazy, trashy, cheap and completely out of your price range. Fans dress like her, confide in her, pray to her. She's our lady of rock 'n' roll. If you desire her, that's all right, she wants you to. Her nickname's "Squeeze." She's Marilyn Monroe and Joan Crawford reincarnate.

Interview by Scott Cohen

CONFESSIONS OF A MADONNA



Michael McKenzie



Leura Levine

Trash

I like to look the way Ronnie Spector sounded: sexy, hungry, totally trashy. I admire her tonal quality. I don't have a deep, throaty voice or a womanish voice when I sing. I think my voice sounds innocent and sexual at the same time. That's what I try to tell people, anyway; but they always misconstrue what I mean when I say "sexual innocence." They look at me and go, "innocent, huh?" They think I'm trash.

Sexcess

I couldn't be a success without also being a sex symbol. I'm sexy. How can I avoid it? That's the essence of me. I would have to have a bag over my head and over my body; but then my voice would come across, and it's sexy.

Idols

My first pop idol was Nancy Sinatra. Go-go boots, miniskirt, blond hair, fake eyelashes—she was cool.

My first movie idol was



Curtis Krapp

Marilyn Monroe. The movie character I identified with most, though, was Holly Golightly; because when I first came to New York, I was lonely, lived by myself, was going to parties and not fitting in. I loved Brigitte Bardot, especially in *Contempt*. She kept saying, "Do you love me? Tell me what is beautiful about me." I can relate to that totally because I really care about the way I look. I wanted to look like Brigitte Bardot. I

wanted to make my hair blonder and wear pointy bras and go out with Roger Vadim. I also wanted to look like Jean Seberg in *Joan of Arc*.

When I was growing up, I was religious, in a passionate, adolescent way. Jesus Christ was like a movie star, my favorite idol of all.

Look-Alikes

If I were a girl and knew me, I'd want to dress like me. If

I were a guy, I'd dress either like Gregory Peck, when he was really young, or James Dean. I'd either wear ripped jeans and a T-shirt or a suit and tie.

Eating Out

At one point I was living in New York and eating out of garbage cans. Actually, it was not a garbage can on the street; it was the garbage can in the Music Building on Eighth Avenue where I lived with Steve Bray, the guy I write songs with. (He's *Useful Male #2* or *#3*, depending upon which article you read.)

I had been squatting in a loft, living there illegally, but it burned down. There was no heat or hot water, so I had all these electric space heaters around this little piece of carpeting I slept on. I woke up in the middle of the night surrounded by a ring of fire. One of the heaters had set fire to the rug and it was spreading. I jumped up and dumped water on the fire, which made it spread more. Then my nightgown caught fire. So I took it off, got dressed, grabbed a few things, like underpants and stuff—all my important things like tapes and instruments were already over at the Music Building, three blocks away—and I went over to the Music Building and started sleeping there.

I had a band at the time and was playing places like Max's and C.B.G.B.'s. All the money we made paid for the van that transported our equipment. We shared our rehearsal loft with another band, so they practically paid the rent for us, and all our equipment was in that one room. Steve and I slept between amplifiers. We budgeted what little money we had to about \$1 a day. We had credit in all the Korean delis within a five-block radius of the Music Building and with our dollar we'd get some yogurt and peanuts. Then Steve and I would fight over whether we should mix the peanuts with the yogurt. He liked to eat them together and I liked to eat them separately. When we'd run out of money, I'd pass by the garbage can in the lobby of the Music Building, and if it smelled really good—like if there was a Burger King bag sitting on top that someone had just deposited—I'd open it up, and if I was lucky, there would be french fries that hadn't been eaten. I'm a vegetarian, which is why I didn't eat the burger.

Money

The first real money I ever got was \$5000 from Sire Records, and the first expensive thing I bought was a Roland synthesizer. The next big money I got was publishing money for writing songs. I would get \$1000 for every song I wrote. I wrote most of the songs on my first album, so I got what seemed like a lot of money at the time, and I moved to the East Village and got my first apartment. With the next money I moved to a loft in Soho, which was triple the rent I was paying in the East Village. These were all necessary things. The first most extravagant thing I ever bought—that I felt really guilty about buying—was a color TV. I never had a TV before in the



Joseph Stevens

seven years that I had lived in New York. When I grew up I didn't even have a color TV. So I got a color TV, a VHS machine and a push-button remote control.

Belly Buttons

My favorite button is my belly button. I have the most perfect belly button: an innie, and there's no lint in it. I never wore a jewel in my belly, but if I did it would be a ruby or an emerald, but not a diamond. When I stick my finger in my belly button, I feel a nerve in the center of my body shoot up my spine. If 100 belly buttons were lined up against a wall, I could definitely pick out which one is mine.

Crucifixes

Crucifixes are sexy because there's a naked man on them. When I was a little girl, we had crucifixes all over the house, as a reminder that Jesus Christ died on the cross for us. Crucifixes are something left over from my childhood, like a security blanket. I liked the way they look and what they symbolized, even before



Peter Martin

they were fashionable. I buy mine in Spanish bodegas, where they have rosaries in lots of colors. I have a really long one that looks white in the light, but glows in the dark. Every new-wave designer has crucifixes in their line. Calvin Klein doesn't, but he's Mr. Mainstream. Girls who buy Calvin Klein jeans don't wear crucifixes.

Bras

I have to wear a bra. I'm the only one in my family with breasts. Bras that open in the front are best and torpedo bras are the sexiest. On my *Like A Virgin* record cover and in all the photographs, like when I did the MTV show, I'm in my bustier. Bustiers are very restricting. They have ribs that make you feel you're suffocating and zip up the back. They're tight and squeeze you in. I wear them because they're very 19th centuryish. They have that really svelte look. I like the way it makes my body look. It's very sexual. I have about five of them. I go to a regular lingerie store and get the basic nylon bustier, with no frills, and have it customized with lace or tulle. I wish I was flat-chested and didn't have to wear a bra. It's one extra piece of clothing to worry about.

Returning Calls

I used to call different management companies, agencies, A&R people, club owners, you name it, and no one ever returned my calls. If someone did, ten-to-one it was some horny old man who was in charge of listening to tapes and when he'd hear my voice, he'd want me to come in and bring the tapes, and then

he'd put the make on me. Now when I call people they come right to the phone. Everyone except John Peters, the big Hollywood producer who did *Flashdance* and my movie *Visionquest*. He's a real schemer—wheeling and dealing all the time—and the only one who doesn't call me back.

Sister Madonna

If I wasn't doing what I'm doing, I would be a nun. The reason I'm not a nun is because you can't take your own name. How could I change my name? I have the most holy name a woman can have. But if I had to change my name, I'd use my confirmation name, Veronica. I chose her because she wiped the face of Jesus, which I thought was really dramatic.

Physical Attractions

I dig skin, lips and Latin men. I'm attracted to bums. When I went to Paris, I hung out with Algerians and Vietnamese guys who didn't have jobs, who just drove around on motorcycles and terrorized people. I've always been attracted to people like that, because they're rebels and they're irresponsible and challenge the norm. I try to rehabilitate them. I'm just trying to be the mother I never had.

Virginity

I wouldn't like to sleep with a guy who was a virgin. I'd have to teach him stuff and I don't have the patience. I'd rather deal with experience. When I say virgin, like in my song, I'm not thinking about sexual virgin. I mean newness. Even after I made

love for the first time, I still felt I was a virgin. I didn't lose my virginity until I knew what I was doing.

Monogomy

The longest monogamous relationship I've had was 2½ years, right before Jellybean, with someone who never wants to see me again. He's the guy trying to run me over in my "Burning Up" video. It wasn't just because I was seeing someone else. Our relationship was deteriorating anyway. But I've had my

over to get to the top, everyone of them would take me back because they still love me and I still love them. I wish I was a million different people so I could stay with each boyfriend while moving on to another one. I learn more, want more, and suddenly—that person isn't enough. The problem is, after you start to love someone, you start to hurt them. I get interested in somebody else and I latch on to that interest to get me through the other one. It's awfully painful, but then I have this new guy to look forward to.

Records

The first song I remember hearing was "The Twist" by Chubby Checker. The first record I ever bought was either "Incense & Peppermint" or "Give Me a Ticket for an Airplane." I don't remember if there was music playing when I lost my virginity, but the best music to make love to nowadays is anything funky or soulful, like the Gap Band, Prince or the Isley Brothers. The best music to wake up to is "Moments in Love" by Art of Noise and the best music at the moment to workout to is anything by Prince, Lime, Bronski Beat or Bruce Springsteen. My first album was a total aerobics record. I make records with aerobics in mind.

because people associate a girl who's successful with a bimbo or an airhead. Sexy boys never get bad press. Do you think they'd bug Prince if he pulled out his dick on stage? If I ever did something like that, I'm the slut of the year.

Fights

Most of the fights I have with boyfriends are over how I'm not paying enough attention to them or I'm always off doing things for my career. Of course, I disagree. I have a lot of shit to do right now. I'm always surrounded by people. I have a very visible career. I got to go out West and audition guys to be in my videos and I got to kiss guys in my movies. But I always say it's the quality of time and not the quantity of time. If you spend the time that you do have together not fighting, you might enjoy each other.

Little Madonna

I was never a Girl Scout, but I was a Campfire Girl and a Brownie. Campfire Girls had the cooler uniform. I was never good at being part of an organization. When I was a Brownie, I ate all the cookies. When I was a Campfire Girl, I'd camp out with the boys and get into trouble.



Edward Russett

heart broken, too. All my boyfriends hurt me in their way, by lots of things, but I'm not telling you.

Stepped-on Men

All those men I stepped all

When I'm mad or have a fight with my boyfriend or hate my record company, I work out.

Bad Press

I get so much bad press

Fantasy Photo

Of all the great photographs in history, I'd most like to have been in one of me having dinner with John Kennedy, with Marilyn Monroe sitting next to him, singing "Happy Birthday."

MADONNA'S FIRST MOVIE

Young director Stephen Lewicki was throwing out old resumes and head shots when one fell from the basket. As he stooped to pick it up, he noticed, behind the unimpressive photograph, the last page of a handwritten resume that gave the same birthday as his, August 16. He re-read the letter, reconsidered the urgently hopeful face, and hired Madonna Cicconi to star in his first movie.

That was just over five years ago and "star" might be stretching exaggeration, compared to where Madonna has since taken her career. *A Certain Sacrifice* is an hour-long melodrama of surprising intensity and value, shot, unfortunately, on Super 8mm, then edited on one-inch video to further visually obscure it. In the movie, 20-year-old Madonna plays Bruna, a post-punk drifter, who meets a refugee from the suburbs in Washington Square's fountain (see bottom right). The two become lovers and ultimately avengers of their own love's desecration. Sleazy Raymond Hall rapes Bruna in a coffee shop toilet but is hunted down and kidnapped by the lovers and Bruna's former "family" of sex-slaves. In one of the massive, cathedral-like arches under the Brooklyn Bridge, Hall is executed in an eerie human sacrifice.

Before shooting the rape scene, Lewicki instructed Charles Kurtz, who plays Hall, to tear Madonna's shirt off when raping her, without telling

Madonna beforehand. This heightens the intensity of the scene, which is played to perfection.

Lewicki concedes to having had a mild, unconsummated crush on her and recounts one afternoon spent in Battery Park when he ate blueberry yogurt out of her ear. "That woman has more sensuality in her ear than most women have anywhere on their bodies," he says wistfully.

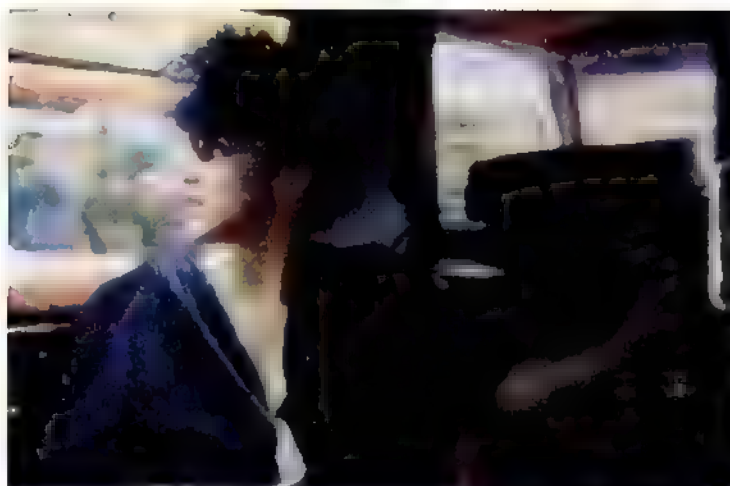
But he was more concerned with her as an important element in his movie. In his opinion she is a good actress. Not another Garbo, except perhaps in mystique, but gifted. She really does want to act more than make music, he feels.

Asked to sum her up, after much thought he concludes simply: "ambitious," and tells how she seemed happy only when the center of attention, especially on camera. In the letter/resume she sent him, she wrote how drama class was an oasis in an otherwise mostly despised schooling. "For one hour every day all of the megalomaniacs and egotists would meet to compete for roles and argue about interpretation. I secretly adored each moment, when all eyes were on me, and I could practice being charming or sophisticated, so I would be prepared for the outside world."

One anecdote provides a revealing insight: apparently Madonna had already met her leading man, Jeremy Pattnosh, a couple of years earlier on a park bench, but he didn't remember. Just before filming a key love scene with Pattnosh, she reminded him. Lewicki had already turned on the camera and so recorded it, though not the conversation. When he reviewed the silent footage, he saw a side of Madonna that "you never see, she doesn't allow you to see. A tremendous vulnerability. She seems to have a tremendous need for approval."

Recently, Madonna, her fashion co-ordinator, Mary Paul, and her ex-boyfriend Jellybean went to Lewicki's apartment to see the movie, which she claimed she liked. She talked constantly when she wasn't on screen.

As she was leaving, she stopped in the doorway and turned to Lewicki.



Photographs by Steve Lewicki

"Well Stephen, fuck you."
"What do you mean?"
he asked.

"Well, we've always had an adversarial relationship and I wanted to keep it up."

Then she disappeared into the New York night, taking her entourage, mysteries and secrets with her.

—Bob Guccione Jr.

Scenes From *A Certain Sacrifice*.

Top: Bruna hijacks a limousine and cruises Times Square looking for the man who raped her. Center: Bruna and her "family" of love slaves.

Bottom: girl meets boy.



Laura Levine



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PAINTED WORDS, TAINTED LOVE

Going beyond Roxy Music, Bryan Ferry breaks a three-year silence with his first solo album, which may be his strongest and most inspiring work.

Article by James Truman

Great pop records do more than define the present; they lay a minefield around pop's future. Hesitancy to follow can leave a career mired in the past, forever backdated. Being too quick to follow suit invites a barrage of criticism: obvious, predictable and hopelessly unoriginal, for starters. The most immediately interesting thing about Bryan Ferry is that he makes great pop records. Secondly, after 13 years in the field, as both solo artist and leader of Roxy Music, he has never been called obvious, predictable or unoriginal.

When he first launched the group early in 1972, Roxy Music came through as a brilliantly conceived, genuinely original new-age sensation—which like all new-age sensations, and especially British new-age sensations, seemed destined to flourish and fade with the cycle of fashion it set in motion. But Roxy Music lasted; it was built to last. Reaching beyond their inspired-amateur beginnings, they got even better. In the process, they quickly jumped from being a contender to becoming the competition—something hard to get past without looking at, referring to, borrowing from. Although the group's first records didn't make much impact in America, their influence clearly did. Elegantly played out in early Talking Heads, brazenly pillaged by The Cars, it still rebounds through the work of a whole bunch of other minor-leaguers. And as for Britain—well, one might take a roll call, working backwards from Duran Duran, an efficient if rather vacuous junior high version of mid-period Roxy.

Whether Ferry takes this as flattery or rude insolence (and he'll go with either, depending on the weather) isn't the point. The point is that Roxy Music progressed, and stayed interesting, by expanding their early work rather than by reacting to new market trends, as Bowie did. This may be a tribute to Ferry's vision, but it has made things complicated, hard to read. In fact, complicated in stereo: From one channel, ricocheting back and forth in perfect time warp, there's been a steady stream of Roxy soundalikes, a persistent overture to a familiar refrain; from the other channel, the real thing, also throwing out echoes of another time and place. It's still a Roxy world out there.

An even greater problem, however was that, even at the beginning, it was hard to grasp exactly what Roxy Music actually was. No one could claim that Bryan Ferry invented rock, or for that matter art-rock, avant-pop or new-age blues and balladry. Nor was he the first pop entertainer to understand irony, camp or nostalgia. The vocabulary already existed. However, by rearranging the syntax he succeeded in broadening its scope, and he drastically reshaped its meaning. With one ear turned to rock and blues, the other to the avant-garde, and with both eyes tracking the giant sprawl of twentieth-century popular culture, Ferry's songwriting brilliantly played one off against the other. The swirling, atonal drone of "In Every Dream Home a Heartache," a love song sung to an inflatable sex doll, lent the lyrics a grim foreboding even as it shaded them with irony. "2.H.B.," a blue mood framed by cocktail lounge piano, paid a campy tribute to Humphrey Bogart at the very same time as it choked on the sob in Ferry's throat. You could go on: to the rock 'n' roll love song which made the girl's car number plate into its chorus, to Ferry crooning a smoke-curling lyric while the band veered off in the direction of the Shirelles . . . at a time when the consensus idea of art-rock lay in schlock versions of nineteenth century classical music, here was strange stuff indeed. That Ferry made it all sound straightforward and sincere put him beyond strange: probably a genius, possibly a madman . . . an enigma at least.

"Perhaps a natural oddball," he suggests, from the far corner of the room, to which he has temporarily retired. One quickly learns that the next hardest thing to pinning Ferry down to do an interview is pinning him down while actually doing the interview. Surprisingly

shy, scrupulously polite, he fields questions by nervously pacing up and down the floor, as though he'd mislaid the answers and was feverishly searching for them. If the walls were to evaporate, you'd sense that he'd quite happily disappear, too.

His last interview, on British television last year, settled this beyond question. Stipulating that it take place on a favorite beach, close to his old hometown, Ferry began at a slow amble, progressed to a brisker stroll with each question, and, by the end, had interviewer, cameraman and sound crew jogging at his heels as he took off into an approaching North Sea mist—which suggests at least a slightly eccentric sense of humor.

"Actually, I just don't enjoy interviews," he says. "The whole thing of talking about my work has always made me feel uneasy or embarrassed, as if I didn't want to talk about it with myself, never mind anyone else. It's perhaps just an old-fashioned romantic notion of inspiration coming from somewhere I don't really understand, and being superstitious about trying to analyze it."

An analysis of the oddball might easily begin in Newcastle, an industrial city in the north of England, where, in 1945, Bryan Ferry was born. Although poor, his parents stressed education and after high school helped him into art college. In that, he was superficially no different from thousands of others; British art colleges being a kind of traditional safety net for working-class teenagers. To many, they've been a means of access into fashion and music; to many, many more, they offer the only possible creative interlude between high school and a career as a truck driver. But, Ferry was serious about becoming an artist, and the college he attended was actually the Fine Art Department of Newcastle University, headed by Richard Hamilton, then Britain's foremost avant-garde artist. He was also serious about American R&B and soul music, even fronting a couple of local, part-time pub bands who knocked out cover versions of Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding. "At that stage it was just a matter of wanting to make my mark somehow, of feeling that I had some kind of talent to offer," he says, passing by the tape recorder on another lap of the room. "Having started thinking that I would be as a painter, it took several years, in my usual roundabout, dreamy kind of way, to transfer that to being a musician." He also took a move to London where, among other things, Ferry supported himself by teaching art to a class of teenage girls. His method was to bring a record player, crank up the Motown, and let them get on with it.

On the lookout for musicians to help him perform the songs he'd begun writing, he met a classically trained oboist-turned-rock-saxophonist by the name of Andy Mackay, who in turn introduced him to an old college friend, a dedicated non-musician with an interest in electronics and a passport to prove he really was called Brian Peter George St. John le Baptiste de la Salle Eno. Somewhere along the line they also recruited guitarist Phil Manzanera and drummer Paul Thompson. They already had a bass player who, like all Roxy Music bass players, didn't last long. Around the peripheries, other figures appeared: Anthony Price, a young, wonderfully innovative London fashion designer; Mark Fenwick, heir to a chain of British department stores and a partner in a go-ahead new management company called E.G.; and publicist Simon Puxley, an eccentrically brilliant Ph.D. whose press releases, at their best, were absolutely incomprehensible. Which is to say there was a concept of sorts: an experimental rock group, dressed to kill, backed up by sound business sense and prone to third-degree eccentricity.

Canny enough to recognize the band's weakness—performing—Mark Fenwick kept their early appearances low-key, waiting till they put out a record before launching them in earnest.

The ploy worked, because the record was terrific.



Paul Nordin/Photo Reserve

First released in June 1972, *Roxy Music* is still a revelation—an extraordinary synthesis of fractured rock 'n' roll and wild experimentation. Like the early Velvet Underground, which it occasionally recalled, the sophistication of ideas transcended their sometimes-shaky execution. At the same time the cleverness of Roxy's presentation not only transcended rock-biz hype, but subtly reversed its rules. Rather than use image as packaging, they made it a central part of the content, a celebration of its meaning. And those outfits! Post-dated Fifties Rocker in '72, Glam Smoothie in '73, White Tuxedoed Crooner in '74, Pampas Cowboy alternating with American G.I. in '75—together a shopping list of early '70s style, which Ferry either took so seriously he had to be joking, or so light-heartedly he could only be serious. Ambivalence was always part of the picture. So, too, was the curious, double-edged irony of Roxy Music, which on the one hand seemed intent on distancing itself from its subject matter, as if placing everything in quotation marks, while on the other hand making clear that it all really mattered. And even when it didn't matter it mattered, so to speak.

There's a popular story about a young art student who, asked to write about an important work of contemporary art, produced a thesis on Bryan Ferry. (We're not sure if he passed, but he changed his name to Adam Ant and did OK anyway.) The point being that the British obsession with style, interpreted by foreigners as a decadent silliness, is, to the British, a very serious business. There are at least two good reasons for this. Firstly, style is one of the few things the British are still good at; and secondly, it is one of the very few things which can, even temporarily, lift the barriers of class. In a society as rigidly class-bound as Britain, style is an important weapon, almost a political act. To look better, to dress sharper, than the ruling class is the only way

"It's something that's very difficult to explain, especially to younger people, because when you're young and you have that enthusiasm and ambition you don't ever imagine not having it."

to gate-crash a party to which one would rarely, if ever, be properly invited. From the Teddy Boys in the '50s to Mods in the '60s, this impulse has been a primary force behind British youth culture. In that respect, the strongest memory of Roxy's early audience doesn't revolve around the celebrity art crowd, the professional hipsters, the international thrill-seekers; it consists of the many more provincial working-class teenagers who, within days of a Roxy tour kicking off, had perfectly duplicated the New Look, parading it shamelessly, in celebration not just of Ferry but of themselves.

"I always loved that," he enthuses, slowing down a trace. "That whole thing of glamorous lifestyles . . . it was something which had always attracted me as a boy. Not necessarily posh lifestyles, just things that were more interesting than where I came from. I resented so much the idea of being born into a certain caste and having to stay in that bracket forever. It became a very strong motive, to win that freedom of movement which would allow me to experience different kinds of life, to have the opportunity to change."

Along with David Bowie, Roxy Music institutionalized the idea of audience-as-star, even if their methods and motives were subtly different. Where Ferry, beneath the playfulness, embraced role-playing as though his life depended on it, Bowie changed persona as his career demanded it—to spruce up each new chapter of his work-in-progress. The difference was perhaps less apparent in Europe, where the two have always run neck-and-neck, than in America, where the heavy-metal-pop-plus-makeup of *Ziggy Stardust*—an astute combination of the commercial and the controversial—quickly realized Bowie's stadium-sized ambitions. Roxy Music, meanwhile, were playing bottom-of-the-bill to Jethro Tull. "There were just no compatible acts in America to package them with," recalls Mark Fenwick. "The tour was a disaster. The record industry didn't know what to make of the group, and with a couple of exceptions (notably Cleveland's WMMS) radio wouldn't touch us." It would take another three years, and the Top 30 success of "Love Is the Drug," before Roxy broke through in any substantial way.

As for the Bowie issue, Ferry is evasive, thinks it bad form to discuss it. All the same, it's not hard to see that he's less impressed with Bowie's music than with his sales figures, and wouldn't lose sleep if those took a nosedive. Neither is it hard to figure out that Bowie's interest runs the other way. In 1973, shortly after Ferry announced plans for *These Foolish Things*, an album of arch cover versions of his favorite oldies, Bowie packed his bags for Paris, made a record in two weeks, and rush-released it on his return. The result was *Pin-ups* . . . an album of his favorite oldies.

"He phoned me up one day to tell me he'd finished it," Ferry recalls. "I'm not sure what he expected me to say. I think I said 'Oh.'"

Since then they haven't exactly been tennis partners,

although Bowie periodically crosses the gap by quizzing Ferry's friends on his future plans and, hitting right below the belt, by using Ferry's tailor in London. Which might also explain why he approached Ferry to appear in his "Jazzin' For Blue Jean" video—as the debonair smoothie who mocks the Bowie-character's attempt to turn himself into a lady-killer. The invitation wasn't taken too seriously. Bowie settled for using a Ferry lookalike.

For all that, there's no question that Bowie better anticipated the advent of punk rock in 1977. Just before it broke he moved to West Berlin, to live an ascetic life and make avowedly uncommercial art records with (irony!) Brian Eno. Credibility-wise this was unbeatable; it guaranteed him safe passage through the revolution.

Ferry couldn't have appeared more out of step if he'd planned it. Having disbanded Roxy Music the previous year ("I felt I had to grow up musically"), 1977 found him living in a famously expensive Swiss hotel and recording with a bunch of super-slick session musicians. At the same time, his name had become a fixture in British society gossip columns. Taken together, these three were as precise a contravention of The Spirit of '77 as was humanly possible. In actual fact, the gossip columns had been a nagging issue for several years, ever since Ferry had started to live out his theatrical interest in glamorous lifestyles in the real world. In fairness, he'd never promised that he wouldn't. But to those who thought they'd made the journey with him, only to find themselves stranded back in a duller world, it felt like a betrayal. And in 1977 it all rebounded badly. When the same gossip columns informed him and the rest of the interested world that his model girlfriend Jerry Hall had left him for Mick Jagger, Ferry began to appear not merely a snob, but a loser as well. The punks turned on him with a vengeance. Or, more exactly, with the vengeance of rebellious teenagers finally leaving home. Punk rock's emphasis on musical amateurism, on style (now messing up instead of dressing up) and on turning its audience into part of the show exhibited more than a few hereditary ties to early Roxy Music.

Ferry's Swiss record, *The Bride Stripped Bare*, was a commercial disaster; not merely because the punks didn't like it—it was pretty nondescript anyway. Its failure—his first—hurt him badly. Punk, he says, didn't.

"I think I vaguely enjoyed the fact that it was so different from what I was doing. I suppose had I been philosophical I might have rolled around in the grass tearing my hair out! 'Oh no! Some new people have actually made records!' But I don't think I really minded at all. It was more difficult when later waves came along and my early style of music was resurrected. I could recognize people writing songs in the same way, using the same reference points and so forth. Sometimes you felt they were a little too clone-like, but that's the way it goes. Ultimately, it just made me more determined to be myself."

In late 1978, Ferry re-formed Roxy Music with Andy Mackay, Phil Manzanera and a soon-to-disappear Paul Thompson. It was no secret that, on a personal level, the group didn't especially like one another. It was no secret that the group hadn't much liked each other for years. Eno's sudden departure in 1973, after the *For Your Pleasure* album, exposed the existence of rivalries, or at least different perceptions of democracy. While the others wanted equal partnership, Ferry saw the group as a vehicle for his ideas, which was how it had started and, in the event, continued. He also claims the squabbling was inspirational. "Being quite a competitive person, it always suited me to be in that kind of situation, where I had other talents to fight, as it were. A lot of my best work came from that, the urge to improve upon something which someone else had played or suggested."

Over the next two years, the remodeled Roxy Music put out two big-selling albums, *Manifesto* and *Flesh and Blood*. Both offered beautifully played, immaculately crafted Roxy songs, picking up from where *Siren*, the last group album, had left off in 1975. But as a wandering sage was heard to remark, great pop records lay a minefield around the future. From a group which had once sold you not just a record, but an alternative-

option lifestyle, there seemed to be a dimension missing. Specifically, the dimension of context: neither record displayed their former flair for seizing a moment so perfectly that it became exclusively theirs. Oddly enough, the next album overcame this problem by ignoring it completely. Rather than trying to repackage Roxy's early hysteria, *Avalon* refined it into a shimmering, hallucinatory stillness, floating free of time, place or fashion. Selling more than three million copies, it became their most successful album and, definitively, their last.

"When it was finished I knew there would never be



Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

another," says Ferry. "It nearly didn't get made at all. It just got to be too much agony, dealing with personality conflicts all the time. As I said, it used to be good for my work, but I thought it just got to the wrong side of being right. To keep it together just as a business name didn't seem a good enough reason."

Accordingly, he has spent the past 18 months recording *Avalon*'s sequel, flitting restlessly back and forth between London and New York. "It gets harder every time, in terms of finding that speed and energy of youth. It's something that's very difficult to explain, especially to younger people, because when you're young and you have that enthusiasm and ambition you don't ever imagine not having it. I still respect what I do as art, I'm afraid, which is why I wait so long for that genuine enthusiasm to come, otherwise the work wouldn't mean anything."

"Also, I really do want to sound different from other people, and from my previous work. Unfortunately, it means that you do spend 18 months making a record, because you think of an idea and then have to go beyond it, and then go beyond that until it gets to the point where you think you're happy with it. Then you think 'Have I gone too far?' I never reach the point where I think my records are completely perfect. Usually I just get exhausted and reluctantly let go of them, which is where a deadline helps." Only this time it didn't. Originally scheduled for release last November, the album got put back to January, then February, then March and now is set for early April. At press-time it lacked only a title and a final mix of one song, which means it should certainly be ready before Christmas.

To make sense of this is to understand that indecision is Ferry's way of getting things done. The late-breaking, against-the-odds masterpiece of his post-*Siren* career, the new album extends a patchwork of eerie, fragile

tensions: a music whose energy comes not from resolving contradictions, but from leaving them subtly unresolved.

Of course Ferry is inconsolable on the matter. It's 3 A.M. in his New York hotel room. There's an advance copy of Jerry Hall's forthcoming literary memoirs on the table. "I just wish Jerry wouldn't exaggerate so much," he sighs. There's also a new mix of a song playing on the sound system. Pacing up and down the room, he picks up on a detail he doesn't like. It's enough: he's off into one of his famously quixotic monologues which, typically, begins with a meditation on the small detail, spoken to no one in particular, blossoms into plans to junk the whole record and finishes in a decision to sell his house and worldly possessions and go live in a cottage on the beach.

Ferry is a hard character to define. Smart, funny, charming, animated when he's off-duty; morbid drifts of insecurity and self-doubt seem to occupy most of his working moments. On another day, in another context, I'd asked him if he thought it was disillusioning to live out one's fantasies.

"I think the corny truth of the matter is that you find you can't buy happiness," he says. "When you're young you think 'I want to be rich and go on a yacht,' and then when you do you find you're still the same, still carrying around the same general luggage. I don't think your mind changes, and your heart certainly doesn't change. Having lived in various places, and having known various groups of people, I've found that I don't really fit in with any of them. It's a strange dawning, because you've always imagined that one day you're suddenly going to fit in somewhere and become a happy person. Not that I'm miserable or anything."

Perhaps the best way to make sense of this is to remember that through the years, the costume changes, the ups and downs of his career, Ferry has maintained at least one steady persona. It's that of the classic romantic, the hero as striver and sufferer, in a world where true love comes hand-in-hand with certain betrayal, where every perfect evening ends up as a table for one, and where every victory has disaster built in.

Which would seem to explain a lot, except that these days Ferry's own personal life is less prone to disaster. When not working, he lives a quiet, deliberately low-key life in the British countryside with Lucy, his wife of three years, and Otis (after Redding), his son of two. It appears a more cheerful and ordered existence than his writing would indicate.

"That's true," he grins. "But don't forget, I have a very good memory."



Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve



WILD, WACKY, WALLY

"Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee," scream fans of Wally George, host of the zaniest talk show on television, as he ejects another "left-wing, lunatic liberal."

Article by Howard Rosenberg
Photography by Gary Leonard

Hey, Wally, this is Hawk. I've been watching your show and I think you're a jerk."
"Oh, yeah, pal? Just to tell you the honest truth, you're getting on my nerves, too, and who asked ya to turn on the show anyway?"

Click.

"Wally, I'm a gay person."

Wally is beside himself. The lines have been infiltrated. "A gay person. Oh, I'm sorry. Let me give you a little kiss and say goodnight. Roll on out of here, pal."

Wally George gets the high-sign from his producer indicating approval for the taped introduction of "Hot Seat." Then he motions me to his side, looks about for possible spies, and whispers that Stanley Siegel, who's had his own wild talk shows in New York and Los Angeles, will make a surprise appearance on "Hot Seat." Stanley will invite Wally to appear on his new show on the Lifetime cable network. A gathering of giants.

Tonight, Wally will discuss pornography with his first guest, Edy Williams, an eternal starlet famed for baring her breasts at public events, and who now is making X-rated movies. The second guest will be Bruce Gevirtzman, who Wally says is a liberal high school teacher. Wally hopes Bruce will reveal "why most of our school teachers are liberally oriented." Is your heart pounding?

The doors of the television studio are opened and the crowd, mostly males in their late teens and early 20s, files in after being frisked at the door for concealed weapons. The studio is packed, and people are standing and sitting on the floor in front of the folded chairs.

Floor director Oscar Atondo rehearses the audience in the "Wah-lee" chant and instructs them how and when to display spontaneous affection for Wally. Suddenly, we're off, as Wally strides in, waving his fists,

showing his appreciation for the thunderous spontaneous affection.

"Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee."

He slides his six-foot-one, 152-pound body behind the small desk on the "Dialing for Dollars" set and introduces his Mortimer Snerdish sidekick David Kennedy. There is a glimmer in Kennedy's eyes. A good sign. He's alive.

"Da-vid . . . Da-vid . . . Da-vid."

Wally urges the abolition of pornography before beginning another of his mind-searing commentaries, this one directed at "our old buddy Teddy Kennedy" who has irked Wally by traveling to Ethiopia and South Africa. Ted Kennedy is roundly booed.

Now, it's time for David Kennedy to say how much he liked Wally's commentary. "Yeah, did you notice that whenever one of these clowns goes to South Africa to tell them how to run their government, they never go over to Russia to tell them how to run their government?" The crowd hoots, Wally applauds and Kennedy slouches back in his chair, mentally spent. He's good for about two sentences a guest.

Next up is Mailbag. "Boy, I tell you we have some real sickos out there watching this program," Wally says. One of them is a "ludicrous maniac" who calls Wally, John Wayne and Reagan idiots, and calls Jane Fonda, Hitler and Jimmy Carter intelligent. Wally crumples the letter, then reads another from a "sicko" who wants to see porno films featuring Cabbage Patch Dolls.

"Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee."

Following some pre-screened questions from the audience, Edy Williams arrives carrying a little white dog. Big, blond, beefy and only barely covered by her strapless, sheer, white dress slit almost up to her you-know-

what, she sits beside Kennedy, who appears to be sleeping with his eyes open. Dog in lap, Edy delivers her manifesto: "I am the star of many great films."

Wally, reaching deep into his vast vocabulary, has a word for Edy: "Ludicrous." Then, after a long pause and gazing into the cosmos or the overhead lights, he demands: "Aren't you the star of *Lady Lust*?" Is she paying him for this lead?

"Wally, that film is now available everywhere in cassette for \$89.95."

But Wally doesn't care about that. He wants to know why she brought "that stupid little dog" with her.

"This dog is not stupid," Edy says.

"It must be stupid to hang out with a porn star," Wally says.

"It's a dog's world today," replies Edy.

By this time it is rather obvious that this entire conversation could have been held underneath a table in a bar and lost nothing. If this show gets any lower, it will be underground.

But wait. Wally quotes the Bible. Edy quotes the First Amendment. Wally quotes Earl Warren. Kennedy appears to have died. Wally quotes the dictionary. And Edy, in a bold move, quotes herself.

Then Wally, reaching into his grab bag of babble, comes up with this: "Men who get sexually excited go out on the streets and rape innocent victims, right?" The audience responds.

"Sick . . . Sick . . . Sick."

There's a commercial break, during which Wally and Siegel plan Stanley's surprise entry. Siegel has been intently watching everything. Freaky sideshows are his meat, but even he seems awed by the relentless banality of "Hot Seat." But, he's a trumper. "Great show," he tells Wally with a straight face.

After the break, Kennedy stirs, apparently roused by the glare of Edy's rhinestones, and Edy again quotes herself, putting Wally on the defensive. "I never said making love is a crime," he says.

Whew!

Wally is in the middle of calling for the abolition of *Penthouse*, *Playboy* and *Hustler* when who should join him but Stanley Siegel! Wally is furious. "Wait a minute. What's going on here?"

"My name is Stanley Siegel."

"Stanley Siegel! C'mon, what are you doing on my show?"

Siegel gets out part of a sentence before Wally orders him off the show, and Siegel, bent over with laughter, is led away.

"Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee."

It's Edy who gets the last word, so to speak, twice shaking her boobs at the camera and suggestively rolling her tongue before departing with her stupid dog.

"Sick . . . Sick . . . Sick."

After a security guard removes a kid trying to give Wally a rubber penis, Gevirtzman becomes the next offering, having to answer for the "liberal left-wing lunatics who are on our campuses right now preaching socialism, talking against the United States and promoting the Soviet Union. I am saying that kind of thing on our campuses must stop. Whaddaya say?"

"Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee . . . Wah-lee."

The show is over. Later, Wally feels a need to justify the hour. "People say, 'Wally, you're a disgrace to the conservative cause because you're making a joke of all this.' I won't say that I'm not outrageous, ludicrous and yelling and all that. That's show business. But at the same time, I'm getting my message across." He's really wound up now, but still seeking approval. "Do you think this was a very exciting show? I knew Edy Williams would drive these guys out of their minds. There is nobody in the world who will say Wally George is an intellectual. But, they will not turn him off. I just know this show is gonna play well."

High school and college kids are the core of Wally's audience. "I have a lot of so-called punks with the red hair and the pink hair and the mohawk who are fans of my show. I always talk to the kids. Sometimes I will go out and mingle with them and they always come up to me and say, 'We love what you stand for; we believe

everything you say.'"

I asked some of the "kids" what they think of Wally and "Hot Seat." "You get some laughs out of it, but you can't take it seriously," one guy says. "I like the way he burns people like homosexuals," says a second. "He's really ludicrous," says a third. "He's an asshole," says a fourth. "He's a right-wing fascist," says a fifth. "He's stupid," says a sixth.

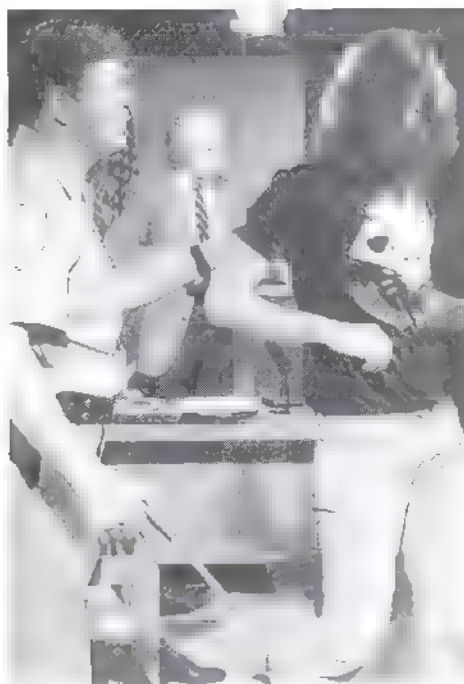
What a difference a gimmick makes. I first met Wally George in 1979 when he was the producer of Sam Yorty's talk show at KCOP-TV in Hollywood. Wally had been a long-time sidekick of Yorty, the former Los Angeles mayor who was a gimpy-minded, drab, beige, monotone conservative, so lifeless that you felt like jabbing him in the ribs to make sure he was still breathing. I'm still not certain that he was. He didn't need to be. He had Wally.

Wally was Yorty's ardent fan and puppeteer. He staged and M.C.'ed the show. He recruited (reportedly even urged talent agencies to send over enticing beauties to be seen on camera), warmed-up and coached Yorty's audience, leading them in such rousing sing-alongs as "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" and "Yankee Doodle Dandy." Bedecked in red, white and blue, he unfurled himself on TV like Old Glory.

How to describe "The Sam Yorty Show"—bargain basement? Nah. Not that swanky. It was the tenement of TV talk shows, an obscure launchpad for right-wing rhetoric, a place where like-minded low-budget conservatives would gather to ridicule nasty "libuh-rals," sitting around and echoing each other and nodding at nodding "Mayor Sam." All this in front of an audience of mostly UFOs who were periodically jolted from their stupor and allowed to ask set-up questions suggested by Wally. Sample: "Uh, is Jimmy Carter doing a good job?" About like Jack the Ripper.

That was early Wally. And whatta whatta whatta Wally. Though not the final Wally. Upcoming: Wally the kazoo.

Flash forward to the present. Wally is riding high as host of "Hot Seat" on KDOC-TV in Anaheim, California. How high? So high that there's a five-month waiting list just to squeeze into the seedy studio and watch Wally and his human sacrifices jibber their way through an hour combining the audaciousness of Joe Pyne with



From the American Civil Liberties Union to the Ku Klux Klan, they are fed to Wally and rendered equal.

the lunacy of TV wrestling. This is roller derby without the rollers, Wally at his woolliest, wormiest, wildest and Walliest.

"Hot Seat" tapes on Wednesdays and airs at 11 p.m. Saturdays. KDOC also breaks the show into half hours that run at 5:30 p.m. weekdays under the title—some-one there must have a sense of humor—"The Best of Hot Seat," followed at 6 p.m. by Wally's live call-in program. Up first on a typical "Hot Seat" is Wally's highly cerebral, meticulously researched, carefully footnoted commentary consisting of a series of wild shouts usually aimed at his favorite target, "left-wing lunatic liberals." Then it's time for Wally to ridicule the mail. Finally comes the centerpiece, Wally chewing up two guests while his frenzied audience chants encouragement on cue and taunts his victims as if he were flattening Hulk Hogan instead of liberals and loonies.

Most of Wally's guests are direct from central casting, outright geeks goofier than Wally, but some are decent actors, espousing fringe causes that make fat targets.

A few are legitimate ideologues or activists grateful for any forum, either regarding "Hot Seat" as a challenge or willing to sacrifice themselves to Wally for a shot at a TV audience. They're overmatched. A cheap painting of John Wayne tacked on the wall behind them, he peeks over their shoulders at the camera and upstages them as they talk. From the American Civil Liberties Union to the Ku Klux Klan, they are fed to Wally and rendered equal. Wally treats everyone the same, scowls at them, abuses them, insults them, berates them ("ludicrous," "ridiculous" and "jerk" dominate his vocabulary) and, most times, disarms them. When guests cross over the line and drive Wally simply berserk, he orders his potbellied security guards to throw them off the show.

The ejected have included cultist Lightning Amen, who said Ronald Reagan was the Antichrist; a stripper who started to strip; gay activist Morris Kight; drugs-are-divinity advocate Norm Lubow; and Timothy Leary, who enraged Wally by mocking him. "Please don't make me go, Wally," pleaded Leary, cringing in feigned terror. Too late. The "jerk" was gone.

"Get outta here!"

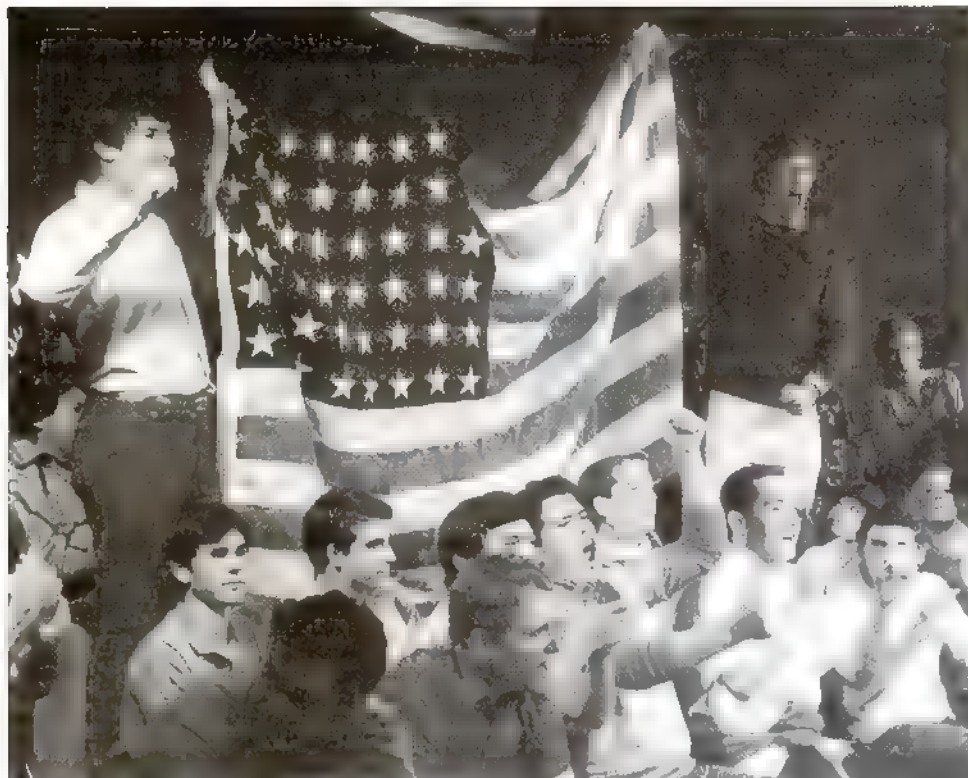
The ejection that put Wally and "Hot Seat" on the map, though, involved pacifist Blase Bonpane. He unwittingly did Wally a favor by overturning Wally's desk after Wally had jostled Bonpane to stop him from lecturing the audience, which was Wally's job. A pacifist goaded into violence? Wally George is that outrageous? He made the national news shows, was booked on "Donahue" and signed as a semi-regular on Alan Thicke's short-lived syndicated talk show.

Wally is nothing if not resilient and impossible to insult. "Any publicity is good publicity," he once said. So even though I had previously pilloried Wally in print as a rabidly rabid rabble-rousing reactionary, I knew he would consent to another interview.

Owned by Golden Orange Broadcasting Company, KDOC is the ideal station for Wally George. The chairman of the board is Bible-thumping Pat Boone. The modest one-story building is located in conservative Orange County, where every adult male is rumored to own a lime leisure suit and white bucks. And the site is in a compatible environment, close to Magic Kingdom, two blocks from Disneyland and around the corner from the Rip Van Winkle Motel.

I'm greeted by Merrie Pisano, Wally's earnest and loyal producer, who six months earlier had been a food caterer. That's versatility. Then out saunters Wally in his double-breasted blue blazer and gray pants, his white-blond hair brushed and sprayed forward into a helmet coif meant to cover his baldness. We sit in his tiny office and Wally, as benign in person as he is stormy on TV, traces the evolution of "Hot Seat."

"I'd been hanging around for years. When I was 14, I started out as a disc jockey in Glendale. I'm 49 now and I've never been off the air since then. I love it. But it's such a . . . damn . . . struggle. So many times I thought I'm never gonna do anything that's gonna make people sit up and take notice. I thought I would be a second banana to someone like Sam Yorty for the rest



of my life. And now, after all these years, I know I have found my niche. This is what I'm cut out to do."

Wally says that "Hot Seat" was Mike Volpe's idea. Poor Wally had been wearing a sneer with no one to sneer at. He had been at KDOC hosting "The Wally George Show," where he and his clique of right-wingers had been boring the polyester off of Orange County residents with their attacks on liberals in absentia. Volpe, upon taking over as vice-president and general manager two years ago, assured Wally he could be another Joe Pyne, the late talk-show bully famous for verbally mugging his guests. "But instead of bringing on people who are the same as you, you should bring on liberals and argue with them." Well, was this Wally's lucky day or what?

"We did it, and the second week we were on the air, something started to explode," Wally says. "For some reason, all the kids started watching it. And by the end of the first month, we were getting bombarded with phone calls and letters."

"Hot Seat" is currently seen in 20 cities from Boston to Albany, Georgia, and Wally is now doing so well on the college speaking circuit, at \$1500 a pop, that he has signed with the prominent Kepler Associates lecture agency, which also represents William F. Buckley. And there's more. Wally cut an album of songs for Rhino Records and is working on a Wally T-shirt deal. He has a fan club. Pisano is president. He has a newsletter. Pisano is editor. For \$39.95 you can have the newsletter, fan club membership, an autographed glossy, a Wally bumper sticker and a videocassette highlighting the first year of "Hot Seat." (Wally George Fan Club, P.O. Box 56TV, Anaheim, CA 92803).

The cassette is a hoot. There is Irv Rubin of the Jewish Defense League throwing a soft drink at former KKK grand dragon Tom Metzger, followed by a brawl in the studio. There is a guest touting bondage and discipline. There is Wally dealing with liberals and "disgusting ridiculous perverts" and too disturbed even to throw them off the show. The message is clear: The world is being overrun by jerks.

"Nothing is staged about it," Wally promises me. "I never rehearse anything. I will discuss with the guests what we'll be talking about, and I warn them I will be

taking them on. I ask them to argue back with me. I want to have a fight. It's stimulating television."

Wally says he finds guests by scanning newspapers and magazines. "However, I'm finding a lot of people are calling me now to be on the show. What's so funny is that I find a lot of guests getting very upset if I don't throw them off the show or call them a jerk. They consider it something of an achievement to be called a jerk."

Wally is not laughing. He regards jerks as a dangerous species. "I see some of my guests as future Jim Joneses or Charles Mansons. Like this Norm Lubow. He now has a cult following and his ambition, he tells me on the air, is to overthrow the government."

Wally has a cult following, too, and some people regard him as a fascist who uses his show to feed paranoia, spread malevolence and indoctrinate the unwary. Wally's reply is swift. "I am advocating all the same things that Ronald Reagan is. I'm advocating patriotism in America. I'm advocating love of God and country. I'm advocating anti-drugs, law and order, anti-communism. How can I be wrong when I'm calling for all that is decent and honorable in America, when I say, time after time again on my program, the very same things Ronald Reagan is saying, what every president of the United States has said."

If his politics were different, Wally would be exactly the kind of publicly ranting fruitcake he would have on his show. What would Wally ask Wally? "I would ask if he is very much upset over the fact that many people in the media look upon him as a joke."

He's not a joke?

Although he would like you to believe otherwise, Wally tries very hard to convince you that the buffoon on the screen is the same off the screen too. "People have said that on the air it's all a joke. I'm playing a role. But I'm really not. People who know me personally have seen me stand up there in my office and bang my fist." He bangs it for effect. "And they've seen me order people out of my office. I've yelled at people over the telephones and hung up on them because they're arguing politics."

Wally lectures his guests on morality. I ask him if he thinks of himself as moral. "I've always considered my-

*"We have some real sickos out there watching this program."
- Wally*

self to be a moral person," he says. Now single, he's been married four times. "The reason I've been married more than once is that I felt it was the moral thing. I didn't feel it was right to shack up with anybody. God, I could have. There are people in this business who have shacked with 12 or 13 or 14 people and never thought anything of it. When I got into a relationship, I felt the proper thing to do was get married, and I still feel that way." Do four failed marriages reflect emotional instability? "I don't think so," Wally says. "Ronald Reagan has been married twice and I've only been married two more times than that."

His first marriage produced two children, whom he has not seen in years, he says, because he's been unable to afford the trip to Guam, where they live with their mother. His second marriage produced his 22-year-old daughter Rebecca De Mornay, who played the hooker in *Risky Business* and has been turned against him by her Hollywood friends, Wally insists. She hasn't spoken to him in more than two years and won't answer his calls or reply to his letters. "All her friends knew me as a right-wing fanatic," Wally says, "and they all told her I could be very harmful for her career because I've spoken out against the type of movies Hollywood has been putting out, nothing but sex and violence and perversion; and I've attacked the politics of Jane Fonda and Ed Asner."

Wally is interested in making a movie himself: about Wally. He's pitching the concept to Hollywood studios. "We would have it partially fictionalized, but primarily based on a guy who bangs his head on the wall in this business for many years, has a couple of marriages and finally succeeds in a "Hot Seat"-type show. He has a cult following from high school and college kids. He makes a record album. He becomes prominent. All his dreams are beginning to come true. People are after him to run for political office. He has a daughter, a liberal actress who turns against him. He appears at a rally and gets threatened that if he walks on stage he'll get his head blown off. So he walks on stage and says, 'Okay, baby, here I am, take your best shot.'"

"We have some very amazing ends to the story," Wally says. "The reconciliation with his daughter, the idea that he may get to run for governor of California and this might lead him to the White House." Which lucky actor would get the plum role of Wally? "John Ritter," he says.

It takes no genius to realize, as Wally is pouring out his Walter Mitty semi-fantasy, that this may be his vision for himself, his best-case scenario, that "Hot Seat" will rocket him to the governor's mansion and onward to the White House, where President Wally would be able to do something about all those jerks who are bugging him.

Failing that, he could conquer Johnny Carson, babbling into the wee hours as America watches in shock. If there is a group that riles Wally more than liberals, it's talk show hosts. Merv, Donahue and Johnny are "spineless pantywaists" who make Wally want to puke. "I can't think of anyone who will say, 'Damn it, now get the hell off my stage.' I know that even if I die now, I have made a mark, and people will say that I said what I wanted to say, and that I kicked people off my show and called them jerks and yelled and screamed. I'd love to go head-to-head with Carson. I think I could overtake him."

Driving away from KDOC, it all seemed to fit. The tirades, the guests, the audience, sleepy David Kennedy, Pat Boone, and the spirits of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck close by in Disneyland. Throughout his career, Wally George has been a punchline searching for a joke. And now, with "Hot Seat," he has finally found it.

NEW SOUNDS



Jack Mitchell

Philip Glass makes new sounds. It isn't only rock n' roll, but it has energy. It's music for the mind, but it doesn't forget the body. This space will feature artists who, like Glass, are making new sounds—whose work doesn't fit into easy categories. They could be on the edge of rock, or the edge of jazz or the edge of space.

Column by John Schoefer

"My idea of hell is being locked in a room and forced to listen to this man's music."

"The most inane, boring, repetitious noise I've ever heard."

"He belongs in a rubber room. I know that's where I'd be if I had to listen to his stuff every day."

These comments from otherwise good-natured, reasonably well-adjusted radio listeners in New York were provoked by the music of one man. By now, Philip Glass has grown accustomed to such responses from listeners who are less than pleased with his pattern-oriented, back-to-the-basics style of music. "I certainly don't expect everyone to like my music—of course I think they should," Glass laughs.

Glass is an amiable, articulate musician whose success is the result of 20 years of hard work and perseverance. Evidence of that hard work surrounds us as we sit in the studio of his Lower East Side home. An upright piano occupies one wall; music paper is everywhere else. Glass is musing about the critics' responses he's had to face over the years. "Clearly they see themselves at the barricades of culture, beating back the barbarians. I happen to be a barbarian."

Here Glass is interrupted—by a horrifying shriek. I sit riveted to the sofa in a state of near-terror. Glass walks out and returns in a few seconds.

"That's my bird," he explains.

A bird? "Yeah, I have a parrot." And lest we forget it, the bird punctuates the rest of our conversation with occasional bursts of ear-numbing malevolence.

Glass, now 48, looks a good deal younger. In the past few years he has become the most prominent example of a musical trend usually called Minimalism, although that term may be misleading. This style began in the 1960s as an attempt to create music out of simple ingredients—for example, repeating notes and chords in gradually shifting layers.

"I think people were hoping it would just go away," Glass says, "and it just makes them angry that not only has it not gone away, but by God, it's all over the place!"

Glass's music is all over the place. Remember the opening ceremonies of the Olympics? Glass's music was heard on millions of TV sets while Rafer Johnson took the torch and climbed those seemingly interminable stairs to the top of the L.A. Coliseum.

Although the Philip Glass Ensemble began performing in 1968, Glass didn't really "arrive" until the early 1970s, when his group of electric keyboards, amplified voices, and wind instruments began attracting young listeners who were bored with the current rock music and put off by the complexities of modern classical music. Glass successfully combined the simplicity and rhythmic energy of rock with the classical composer's concerns for form and structure.

Glass has done much in the past decade to blur even further the distinction between rock and classical music. A graduate of the Juilliard School, and presumably, therefore, a "classical musician," Glass has nevertheless worked with David Byrne of Talking Heads, Paul Simon, Ray Manzarek of the Doors, and has produced albums by the Raybeats and Polyrock.

Glass enjoys working with rock musicians, despite the frequent differences in age. "When I worked with Polyrock, I was 20 years older than the guys in the band," he recalls. "That was funny—they started off calling me 'Mr. Glass.' By the end of the recording session, that was forgotten. But Paul Simon and Ray Manzarek—we're not that far apart in age. And age isn't important; it's how you think."

Unfortunately, when a musician doesn't fit into any of the usual categories, there's a tendency to try to create a new one. The term "Minimalism" was offered as a convenient label for the music of Philip Glass and several other composers in the late '60s. But there are a couple of problems with it. First, the chief examples of this alleged style—Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and John Adams—all dislike the term. The only major Minimalist who hasn't publicly repudiated the label is the founder of the style, LaMonte Young, who remains a shadowy figure in contemporary music owing to the scarcity of his music, both on records and on stage. But no matter what Glass, Reich, and company have to say, the Minimalist label has stuck with them over the years, which brings us to a second, thornier problem. Simply put, "Minimalism" no longer describes what these musicians are doing. Maybe it was adequate for the highly repetitive early works of Riley, Reich, and Glass; but it certainly doesn't do justice to the massive instrumental and choral forces employed in Glass's recent theater pieces.

"Once I began working on large scale music/theater pieces in '76, with *Einstein on the Beach*, it was pretty much the end of that period for me," says Glass. "I don't think the aesthetic of Minimalism and the demands of music/theater go together very well. On the other hand, I don't feel these new works invalidate the old works. We're not toothpaste manufacturers, where a new brand will make the old one obsolete. A work from the early '70s can still have appeal, and a point of view."

"Success is perceived in a lot of different ways," Glass explains. "In 1970 or '71, when I did my first tour, I considered myself a success. I had my own ensemble, I was touring, I had an audience. I wasn't making any money, but I thought I was a success. Then in '76, there was a general public that thought I was a success. But until two years ago, when I could walk into a bank and borrow money to buy a house—that's when the people who know about money thought I was successful. And that's when I realized I

was actually doing OK, when I could get a mortgage on a house. But I was 46 when that happened. So much for art and money."

Glass held down a number of odd jobs until he was in his 40s before he was able to devote himself wholly to music. In fact, the 1976 production of the Philip Glass-Robert Wilson "opera" *Einstein on the Beach* at New York's Metropolitan Opera House meant that there was one less taxi-cab cruising the streets. But though *Einstein* sold out both shows at the Met, it was still a financial disaster. Shortly after the work premiered, Glass was back in his cab, having turned down the Met's offer of a third performance.

"We just couldn't afford it," he recalls. Glass and collaborator Robert Wilson were losing \$10,000 a night on sold-out shows. "Opera houses are built to lose money. If we had been doing *Carmen* or *La Bohème*, we still would have lost money. The difference is that Bob and I didn't have an opera company, so we took the loss ourselves. We'll never make that mistake again."

Since *Einstein*, however, Glass's popularity has grown dramatically. The Philip Glass Ensemble is now a sure box office draw, whether in rock clubs or Carnegie Hall. Glass himself is one of the most sought-after figures in contemporary music, but he is somewhat bemused by the furor his works still create. "*Einstein* was a piece that made people take a stance one way or another; but certainly I never expected to be in the storm of controversy that Akhnaten produced, eight years after *Einstein*. It's had extremely positive and extremely negative reviews; I haven't read anything in between."

Perhaps that's why Glass seems so unaffected by all of the attention he's received in the media and in musical circles. He's lived in the same area of Manhattan since he first came to New York in the late '60s, a slightly seedy part of the East Village that hasn't yet been completely gentrified. "It's happening," Glass admits, "but it's still a neighborhood."

Glass still inhabits the same world of simple chords and easily identifiable melodies and rhythms he did 20 years ago, although the scope and texture of his works has grown enormously. His works still use repetition, but where repetition seemed to be the whole point of some early pieces, in his recent works it's just another tool. The simplicity and direct appeal of his music has affected a whole generation of younger musicians, from Kraftwerk to David Bowie.

Bowie says that several of his songs were influenced by Glass's style. "Well, we've talked from time to time," says Glass, "but we never really got into that. David's music sounds very personal to me. Maybe there's a little influence in something like *Low*, or perhaps the kind of slow pieces he did with Brian Eno."

Certainly one key to Glass's success has been his ability to attract at least a portion of the rock audience. By using rock technology, including synthesizers, Glass has been able to cultivate a sound that's immediately identifiable . . . which is not to say that all his music sounds the same.

"There's a tremendous pressure to repeat successes," he says. "There's also a kind of artistic inertia. So what I've done is create new problems: with *Akhnaten* I used a different orchestra, instead of the Ensemble. I just finished a score for Paul Schrader's film *Mishima*; I wrote it all for strings and percussion, because I'd never done that before. And I figured one way to have a new solution is to change the problem."

The music of composers like Philip Glass is becoming easier to find. Although his early records are now out of print, there are a number of available recordings that might appeal to the adventurous ear:

Glassworks (CBS FS 37265). I'd hate to say this is a mellow recording, so let's just call it his most lyrical.

Koyaanisqatsi (Antilles ASTA-1). A sound track (the title is a Hopi Indian word meaning "life out of balance") featuring a huge ensemble. Very effective, very popular.

Dance 1 & 3 (Tomato 8029, scheduled for rerelease by CBS this year). Glass at his most accessible.

"By His Stripes
We Are Healed."
Isaiah 53:5

"God Wants Us
To Play Heavy Metal."
Stryper



Peter Martin

HEAVENLY METAL

Article by Chris Morris

God rocks!" howls a voice. A pair of bikers in red bandannas and dirty denims stop and stare. One has "Jesus" tattooed on a bicep. On the back of their denim vests is a large portrait of Christ wearing a crown of thorns, encircled by "Christ's Sons—Live or Die." A second, smaller patch says "The Bible Has All The Answers." The bikers turn with fists clenched for any fool wanting trouble. One biker points an index finger at a bunch of kids.

Tough wimps, with studded black leather around their waists and wrists, step behind their girlfriends, who are dressed in sexy, spandex show-all tops, micro-mini skirts and stiletto heels. "Jesus," yells a brave soul. The bikers smile and walk away. Armbands identify the bikers as members of a security force.

Fog envelops the stage at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium and a large, illuminated logo bearing the word "Stryper," the "T" forming a cross, glows in the darkness. The lights blaze, and two enormous red circles with a red slash bisecting them descend flashing from the rafters. One circle reads "Devil," the other "666."

Suddenly, a bunch of teased-hair pretty-boys in yellow-and-black striped costumes buzz onto the yellow-and-black

set. Michael Sweet clutches a yellow-and-black guitar, as does Oz Fox, while Timothy Gaines holds an electric bass decorated in, of course, yellow and black. Robert Sweet waves yellow-and-black drumsticks.

Just in case anyone isn't up on the Scriptures or thinks this is another sex-and-death heavy-metal sleaze show, the boys of Stryper toss dozens of miniature paperback Bibles into the audience. The crowd goes crazy. Robert Sweet climbs on a yellow-and-black pedestal holding his yellow-and-black drums. The back of his bright yellow chair has a simple message in bold, black letters: "Jesus Christ Rocks."

Michael flashes his index finger in the "one way" gesture and hundreds in the crowd flash it back. No index-and-pinky-finger "devil horns" here. On cue, the guitar players jump into the air and 3500 people scream as the band blasts into "C'mon Rock." High-energy, knee-bending, hand-shaking, head-twisting heavy-metal rock with the power and glory of God.

"You know God loves you, you know he does," screams Michael at the point in the song when the lead singer usually exhorts the crowd to get down with the band, or high on dope. "A lot of people don't want to hear about God. You can either accept him or reject him, but he is the one who gave us rock 'n' roll!"

Sermon over, they propel themselves through a set of loud, muscular metal, with fret-mangling guitar interludes and drum solos, all the earmarks of a regular heavy-metal performance. But the lyrics separate the good men from the bad: "No matter how we look, we'll always praise His name," and "The Devil never pays, he robs like a thief in the night!" Go with God, bro'.

Stryper is more than a bit of an anom-

aly on the heavy-metal scene. Metal has recently relied on leering lyrics and Black Mass imagery. The Los Angeles-based groups that have made it nationally—Mötley Crüe, Quiet Riot, Ratt and W.A.S.P.—offer the lures of dope, sex, cheap thrills, and Satanism. But Stryper, a quartet of born-again Christians from nearby Orange County, eschew the pro-Devil trappings in favor of a devoutly Christian approach to power-chording, combining the religious fervor of a Baptist tent show with git-down rock 'n' roll to produce Christian "glory rock." So far, their "Heavenly Metal" has paid off. The band's mini-LP, *The Yellow and Black Attack*, on Enigma, has sold 55,000 units, and their Christmas single, "Reason For The Season," sold 20,000.

Having filled medium-sized halls around Los Angeles, Stryper is now moving up to major venues like the Civic Auditorium and the Anaheim Convention Center. At the Civic, Stryper's sound and fury goes down like a storm. An encore reprise of "You Know What to Do," a majestic, melodic call to Christian arms, brings together clean-cut born-again and standard-issue metalheads, all crushing against the stage barriers for an uplifting finale that leaves everyone spent, just as after a powerful revival meeting.

Backstage, Janice Sweet, co-manager, booking agent, merchandising saleswoman and mother of band co-founders 24-year-old Robert and 21-year-old Michael, says the boys weren't always so dedicated to the Lord. Playing during 1982 in the heavy-metal band Roxx Regime, "they had totally gotten away from the Lord," says Mrs. Sweet, a self-professed born-again Christian of nine years' standing. "Date girls, have sex, get drunk. They were partying and boozing a lot."

And their music? "They weren't doing anything that had bad lyrical content, but

they weren't making a stand for the Lord. The timing wasn't right, they weren't right. God had to put it together."

Then came the conversion.

"It was late in '82, November or December," says Robert. "A guy walked into the garage and said, 'You know the truth, you know what you're doing, you know what you're rejecting.'"

The change was swift, admits Robert. "When God goes before you, he doesn't have to open the door, he can just kick the wall down. It's no big thing to ask the secret password, you just walk through."

Armed with the faith, the Sweets dedicated their born-again beat to Christ, and added Oz Fox, 23, a pal from Whittier's Pioneer High School and a member of an Hispanic Christian family with an on-fire Christian mother. Tim Gaines, 22, a veteran of the L.A. heavy-metal club scene, completed the lineup in early 1984.

"My dad is a Presbyterian minister," says Tim. "That kind of turned me against the whole Christianity thing. I was pretty bad off—ruining my nose with cocaine, and I was an alcoholic. Then, two years ago, God caused a lot of things to happen. My mom got cancer, and my girlfriend broke up with me. I was ready to pull a gun to my head, blow myself away, 'cause I couldn't handle it anymore. That's when God started speaking to me."

Called forth was Stryper, the striped yellow-and-black attack rechristened from the Roxx Regime. Then in a post-rehearsal prayer session, it was revealed to Robert Sweet that the new name was an acronym for "Salvation Through Redemption, Yielding Peace, Encouragement, and Righteousness." Later, at a rehearsal Bible study, the band discovered the passage (53:5) from the book of Isaiah prophesying the suffering of Christ, "By His stripes we are healed."

Prophecy?

"The Jews were the chosen people of God," says Robert Sweet. "Most of the giants behind the music industry are Jewish, and that's great. Someone said to us one time, 'Do you realize that the giants of the music business, who may be buying your contract, are looking right there on your album and seeing the Old Testament, and having respect for that, but at the same time, it's the part of the Old Testament that talks about Christ?' And it totally blew me away." "We had never intended to write the songs to give glory to God," says Michael. "They weren't bad songs, just normal-type songs—Love-boy- or Journey-type songs, but more metal-like. We just changed the lyrics. And it was neat, because most of the lyrics were already set up. All I really had to change were just a couple of words or a couple of lines. They were like preset to where, when I changed those words and those lines, they were talking about God. Jesus. So it's like, He knew."

Totally awesome. The members of the band bristle when I suggest their sound is best suited for revival meetings.

"We're a rock band," Robert says. "Because we're Christians, people get this thing in their heads—'Gosh, they mustn't play regular rock concerts. They don't play rock 'n' roll.' We're a band that God has put together, and he's given us the ability to enjoy the type of music that we like to do and have a good time. A lot of people say, 'Well, why don't you play with just Christian groups?' Stryper's not a Christian group, Stryper's not a religious group. We're a band for Christ."

So how does the band for Christ take the show on the road? Do they play the Hell palaces where clouds of weird smoke float, or parking lot tents filled with hand-clapping revivalists?

"I see evangelical world tours in rock 'n' roll," Robert predicts. "Not in a tent—I see it in the L.A. Forum or I see it in Cobo Hall. Not in a corny way, not in a way to turn anybody off, but in a way to turn people on to something that's good."

Predictably, the members of Stryper are rather vocally opposed to the Satanic elements in the music made by their arena-rock competitors.

"We get frustrated with how Satan's ripping off people," Michael continues. "It makes us want to go out and tell the world even more about Jesus."

"It's a sad thing when you see people slowly committing suicide," Robert adds. "Killing yourself to live, as Black Sabbath would say—the live-fast-die-young syndrome that's happening today."

"And then when you get to Hell, it's a party—that's baloney," says Michael.

"It's like saying, 'The man was such a nice rapist,'" Robert concludes.

So God has sent these "metal missionaries" as an alternative for the Devil-dazed rock 'n' roll masses.

"The whole thing that's being done at our shows is a seed is being planted in the kids," Michael offers. "Maybe they're into the Satanic deal and all that. Many of these kids, after seeing us two or three times, send fan letters saying how they're not into the Satanic metal anymore. They've accepted the Lord, they've changed. Down the road, they become Christians."

Robert's eyes are shining. "A lot of

people out there are curious about the light," he says. "It's like, which room are you gonna walk into—the pitch-black room, or the one that looks pretty cool, that doesn't look dangerous. A lot of the kids in the dark want to walk into the room that has the light. Even when they walk in wearing a Mötley Crüe or Slayer costume, people out there are curious about the message Stryper's putting out. They're curious about Christ, and a lot of them wind up accepting Him."

"The crowd feels a positiveness instead of banging each other's heads together and grabbing each other's hair and slamming one another against the wall and every third word is 'F this' or 'F that.' We want to put across something that's good."

"We heard that the devil-worshippers were spittin' and throwin' bottles and disruptin' stuff at a club show, so we went down to support Stryper," rasps James Rasmussen, one of the two Christ's Sons riders who worked security at the Civic show. "Now we go to keep the crowds mellow, keep things at a low key. I'd ride anywhere for 'em."

Like any other rock band, Stryper also has groupies, but the band members are quick to point out that they don't treat them as do less enlightened groups.

"We tell 'em about God and Jesus Christ," Gaines says. "They put us up on this pedestal like we're some kind of gods, and that can't happen, so we gotta tell them about God." Moreover, the boys know that groupies and drugs are just temptations offered by the Devil.

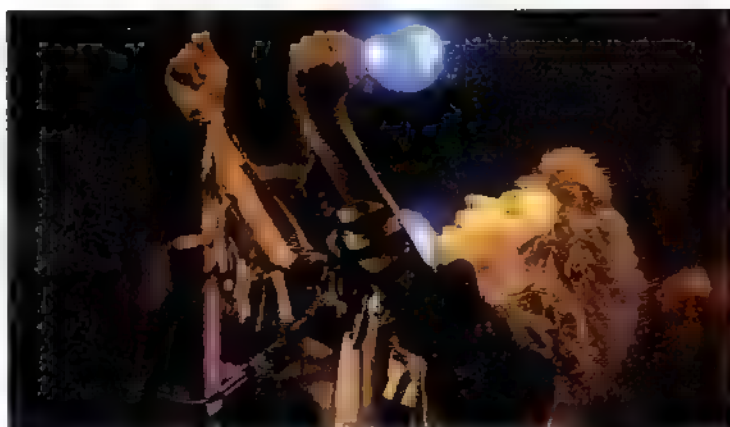
Anyway, God just might be getting ready to ice the Satanic competition. A discussion of the recent gruesome accidents involving members of Mötley Crüe, Def Leppard, and Hanoi Rocks elicits a recollection from Robert:

"Someone said to me the day before [Mötley Crüe lead singer] Vince Neil got in his car wreck, 'How would you feel, Bob, if God started taking out all the groups that held up Satan, just because he's sick and tired of it, and he started moving in groups like you guys, that are rock groups and are authentic, but tell His side of the story? Wouldn't it be a trip?' I said, 'That would be a trip.' Next day. . . ." Robert snaps his fingers.

"It's not like God's a mad axe-murderer up there, ready to chop people, but if you don't rely on His protection, then you're outside of His protection, and you're gonna get nailed."

We'll have to wait and see if God is going to release some sort of rock 'n' roll apocalypse on the Devil's musical minions, but, as things stand, Stryper may not need a judgment day to put their Christian metal across commercially. According to Janice Sweet, the kick-ass spirituality of Stryper is marching on, as CBS has recently signed to release their album in Japan.

"Christian kids are excited, because they're tired of listening to 'wimp Christian bands,'" Mrs. Sweet says. "A lot of kids are tired of secular, devil-worshipping heavy-metal bands, because they're going too far with what they're promoting, whether they actually believe in the Satanic thing or not. I believe that Stryper is going to be another Van Halen—for Jesus." Mrs. Sweet looks satisfied.



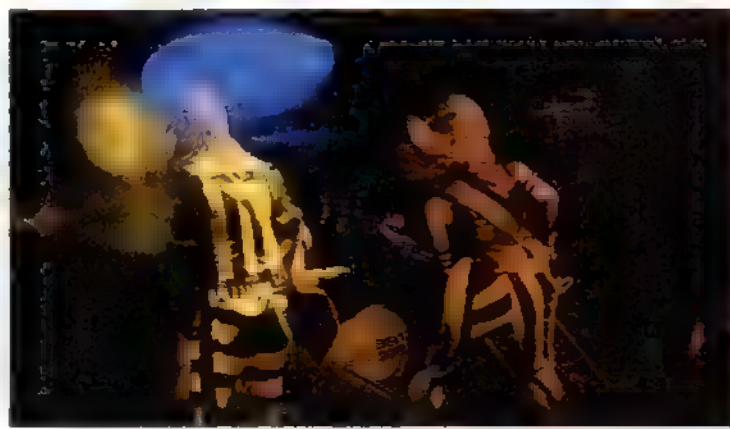
John Scarpatti



Edward Rosen



Peter Martin



Peter Martin

DAYS OF WHINE AND POSES

You've heard the songs,
seen the videos,
read the propaganda,
worn the T-shirt
collected the buttons,
and bought the records,
but do you know why?
The most successful
band in Britain since
the Beatles, recently
toured the United
States, but can you
remember its name?

Two Diatribes by
Mick Brown
and Howard Rosenberg

It is the summer of 1984 in Torquay, an English seaside resort, once boasted of as being "The Riviera of Britain," but is now better known as a loud and gaudy retreat for workers from the manufacturing industries of the English north and midlands.

In the boutiques, department stores and souvenir shops along the main shopping strip, one item is selling faster than any other. It is a simple, traditional, white T-shirt, worn in the jocular, cocky and knowing manner of those traditional holiday souvenirs—the Kiss-Me-Quick hat, with the Kiss-Me-Slowly badge—by everyone from strapping, noisy lads to adolescent teenyboppers with ankle-socks and acne. The T-shirt bears a single word, which has already become the mantra of the summer; a buzzword which in Britain in 1984 elicits universal recognition. The word is "Relax."

It provokes fits of giggles in two 14-year-olds when you stop and naively ask what it means. "It's that dirty record, innit? Frankie Goes to 'Ollywood." What is the song about? They are in no doubt. Sex. Possibly perverted sex. It has to be that. The BBC banned it. So this is not just a T-shirt with a message. It's a T-shirt with a whole mythology. It's the perfect marketing scam! Buy the record. Buy the T-shirt.

Buy the whole damn concept! It is what British pop music is all about now, and nobody embodies it better. In the summer of 1984 there are countless thousands of kids walking around with their puffed chests trumpeting "Relax."

But there is one small problem in this. Frankie Goes to Hollywood does not own the rights to the T-shirt!

The "official" Frankie Goes to Hollywood range of casual wear does exist, of course: a series of white T-shirts emblazoned with a series of witty, pertinent and politically provocative slogans: "Frankie Say Arm The Unemployed"; "Frankie Say War! Hide Yourself"; "Frankie Say Bomb Is a Four-Letter Word," and even "Frankie Say Relax Don't Do It." More than 200,000 of these tasteful and meaningful garments, retailing at £3.99 (\$4.50) each, already have been sold in Britain alone, making them, it is claimed, the biggest-selling T-shirt range ever and leading Island Records—who distributes Frankie's records—to boast that "If the T-shirts had been a single, they would have been another number one." But, the T-

shirt which has outsold them all—the mantra "Relax"—alas, this is not part of the official line of merchandise at all, but a rude item of piracy, produced by God-only knows how many cowboy operations in back-street print shops, flying brazenly through a loophole in copyright laws. "We checked, and we couldn't do a thing about it," laments Tony Pope, the manager of Frankie Goes to Hollywood. "Relax is a dictionary word; it's in the public domain." At Pope's estimate, probably one million "Relax" T-shirts have been sold in Britain alone. "It's probably lost us £400,000 (\$440,000)," says Pope. "Every time I see one of those T-shirts I feel sick."

At the time Pope was complaining, he was managing five young men who were all on their way to becoming instant millionaires, a group which had sold 10 million records in as many months. Sometimes life can be so unfair.

It may, at this point, be necessary to digest a few figures about Frankie Goes to Hollywood. Put briefly, in less than a year, they sold more records more quickly than any group since the Beatles. Their first single, "Relax," sold almost 2 million copies in Britain alone, making it the fourth biggest-selling single in British chart history. Their second, "Two Tribes," sold around 1.6 million. Their third, "The Power of Love," 500,000.

The group's debut album, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*, arrived in record shops at the end of last year (1984) having established a record for the highest number of advance orders for an album in British history. It became such a phenomenon that when *Welcome to the Pleasuredome* was released in Britain, it was accompanied by a series of articles in Britain's most prestigious newspapers, including the *Guardian* and the *Sunday Times*. All concentrated, remarkably, not on Frankie the group, or their records, but on the marketing strategies which, rapidly accumulating myth had it, had put the group in the charts. More particularly, they concentrated on one Paul Morley, a 27-year-old former music journalist, variously described as an "image-maker," "master of the self-promotional offence," and "the man behind Frankie Goes to Hollywood."

In years to come, as the Frankie story is retold by aging record executives to eager young proteges, Morley's role will



Joseph Stevens

perhaps be depicted as that of some sort of grand master of pop hype. It would be more accurate to describe him as a sorcerer's apprentice.

Malcolm McLaren, if not actually inventing the principle of pop manipulation, at least made it walk naked and unashamed with his promotion of the Sex Pistols in the late '70s. By wringing large amounts of money in "advances" from record companies for a group which everybody acknowledged was musically atrocious, McLaren rode a Trojan horse deep into the heart of the record business establishment and brought a perverse respectability to the act of hype. Marketing strategy became the *modus operandi* of every sharp young operator with an eye on the pop charts—selling not just music, but a complete "lifestyle" package. The vanguard of the British invasion of the past three years has applied the principle in earnest. Boy George, Duran Duran and Wham! are "product," as carefully packaged as next year's models from General Motors. None have been launched with quite the spectacular success of Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

It is not entirely true to say that Frankie Goes to Hollywood was an invention of

the record industry—or of Paul Morley, although he undoubtedly helped. This is not a story of Svengali and Tobi; more Laurel and Hardy. The story begins in Liverpool in the '70s with a teenager named William Johnson, son of a taxi-driver. Known to his friends as "Holly," William's existence is already bound by two factors: his knowledge that he is gay, and his obsessive interest in pop music in general, David Bowie in particular.

Having lived largely on the legend of the Beatles, and dormant as a musical source ever since, the northern port city of Liverpool began to experience a quiet and largely unheralded renaissance in the '70s. In a scene based principally around a nightclub called Eric's—from which would later emerge such groups as Echo and the Bunnymen, and Wah!—local attention focused on the epicene and colorful figure of Holly Johnson. Holly scuffed around a bit. He sang with a group called Big in Japan—highly rated locally, but destined to come to naught. He made a solo single, and struggled to put together a project with friends. One of these projects was a group named Frankie Goes to Hollywood, named after a headline in an old film magazine about Sinatra's travel

plans. Ironically, the person who coined the name, Ambrose Reynolds, did not stay with the group.

With two gay members—Holly and his friend Paul Rutherford functioning as singer/dancer/stylist—and three heterosexual ones, the early Frankie served prompt notice of their intent to grab attention. Early performances and photographs saw Johnson and Rutherford in the bondage, studs and leather uniform commonly associated with sado-masochistic practices in gay bars. It was an image the group would play upon considerably as the momentum began to build. Not that the world at large was altogether ready for it; an early review in the music paper *Sounds* described their act as "a massive piece of bullshit"; and hawking their songs around record companies—including "Relax" and "Two Tribes"—the band met unanimous rejection. They were, however, gaining some exposure, including an appearance on a television pop show called "The Tube."

"The Tube" appearance brought the ambitious Frankie Goes to Hollywood to the attention of Paul Morley and Trevor Horn—lately joined together, with Horn's wife Jill Sinclair, in a recording enterprise called ZTT Records—while ZTT was scouting for talent that in Morley's optimistic phrase, would celebrate "the potential of intelligence and imagination within pop" and represent "magnificently the tension, confusion and exhilaration of the '80s."

At that time Morley had only his reputation as a former writer on the *New Musical Express* to recommend him. Previously a grammar school boy and technical college dropout from Manchester, Morley had begun writing during the burgeoning punk era of the late '70s, first for his own fanzine and then for the *NME*.

Morley, during his four years with the *NME*, raised the term "personality journalism" to new and inflated heights. His interviews with pop stars of the day invariably cast him in the leading role as witchfinder general and self-appointed defender of the faith, veering from vitriol to blind passion, fueled by an erudition assiduously fostered in his days working as a sales assistant in a Manchester bookshop. The articles required booklists to understand, often resembling elaborate works of fiction, at other times the basis for some rabid, messianic creed. Morley had been enthused by the daring iconoclasm of punk, and his articles spoke of pop music in terms of religious experience. Between the lines one could read a burning desire for control and wish fulfillment.

Among those most highly lauded by Morley was a record producer named Trevor Horn. Horn had come a long way from his days as bass guitarist playing the cabaret circuit with the Glitter Band. He had been one half of the group Buggles, and enjoyed great success as an independent producer—working out of his wife's studios, with the group ABC and a boy-girl duo called Dollar. He had also produced Malcolm McLaren's first album, *Duck Rock*—a process Horn would liken to "knitting fog."

When Horn set about establishing his own label, he turned to Morley to handle marketing and promotion. Frankie Goes

to Hollywood was clearly ripe for suitable exploitation. They were hungry for success. "They want to be screamed at," Horn enthused. "They want to be loved; and they want to have as much sex as they possibly can with as many people as they can. They are the first group I've ever known that when they get fan-mail they don't write back, they phone up."

Perhaps to conserve their energy, it was thought expedient for the band to withhold the usual grating process of establishing a name by touring. Instead, they would be launched on Horn's studio expertise and Morley's evangelical salesmanship. Morley had already coined a slogan for the band, "All that they desire." It took Horn almost 6 months and some £70,000 (\$77,000) to create "Relax," augmenting the group with session musicians and layers of studio cosmetics. "Relax" was finally released at the end of 1983. It rose slowly up the charts, exciting neither speculation nor outrage until, with the record at number six in the British charts, the most listened-to disc-jockey in Britain, Mike Read, suddenly intervened in a way which Morley, Horn and the band could not have dared dream. Having suddenly noticed that the lyrics to the song included the words "Suck it to it," Read announced on air that he was "banning" the record forthwith. Incredibly, the rest of Radio One, and ultimately BBC television, followed his lead. The controversy swiftly pushed the record to number one, where it stayed for 6 weeks.

The sequel, "Two Tribes," sped up the charts with equal rapidity; at one stage, Frankie held the top two positions. Public interest in the records was fanned by what we might call The Remix Expedient—issuing different mixes of the record as "collectors items," a gimmick ZTT took to mind-boggling lengths. No less than eight different mixes of "Relax" appeared, and ten of "Two Tribes," including "The Annihilation Mix"; "The Carnage Mix" and "The Hibakusha Mix." Devoted Frankie-ophiles wanting the complete collection were obliged to spend some £53.00 (\$59.00). The T-shirts were another useful shop-window for the group, plagiarised from the bold "propaganda" motifs of British designer Katherine Hamnett. "They put a lot of pressure on us actually," admits the band's manager Tony Pope. "Suddenly people were looking to Frankie to come up with fashion as well as music." One response to this was the extensive range of Frankie leisure wear subsequently made available on mail-order through the group's debut album, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*. The Charles Baudelaire sweatshirt; Jean Genet boxer shorts and the Edith Sitwell shoulder bag all bear heavily the mark of Morley's years among the bookshelves in Manchester, and represent the arrival point of pop's rite of passage from a pretense of social idealism to the final frontier of unabashed merchandising.

Amongst the hyperbole and the marketing angles, the true significance of Frankie is hard to determine. Perhaps it is because, as Tony Pope suggests, they are an outpost of "naughtiness" among a plethora of groups who are "packaged, innocuous and safe. They are," says Pope, "an alternative that isn't punk, isn't ob-

noxious, but has that edge of rebellion about it. They are naughty boys."

Certainly, the success of "Relax" reflected something of the desire for hedonism coursing just below the surface of Britain's austere social climate. Although the message that fun is good and—in "Two Tribes"—that war is bad, is hardly a new one. Morley, ever playful, now intent on debunking the theories of manipulation, prefers a more ingenuous explanation. "It was a complete fluke. Every ten years or so something like this happens, everything gels. And you had a combination of Trevor at his height, making great pop records; the group themselves with that singular Liverpudlian combination of suspicion, greed and ambition; and me wanting to shock the pop industry."

"The point is, it wasn't planned. It was all made up as we went along. We obviously planned it to compete with the

**Frankie Say Bomb Is
A Four-Letter Word.
Frankie Say War!
Hide Yourself.
Frankie Say Arm
The Unemployed.
Frankie Say Relax
Don't Do It.
SPIN Say So What.**

Michael Jacksons in terms of sound and presentation. But I think the charm of it to the audience was that it was just young people getting on with it."

There are, however, two question marks over the Frankie saga. One concerns the album, *Welcome to the Pleasuredome*. Hyped as the most eagerly awaited album of the year, 1.1 million copies of the album were placed in record shops by ZTT's distributors, Island. But by Christmas the record had sold only 600,000 copies, and it spent only one week at the top of the album charts before being replaced by Wham!, amidst a fierce backlash by critics. Morley says it is this sort of preoccupation with figures which makes a fun world dull.

The other question mark hovers over the group's American prospects. Morley himself admits that America poses a challenge which even Horn's wall of sound and his media blandishments will find hard to surmount. "The system in America is five years on from Britain; the industry have got it all so sorted out that you can't have the spontaneity over there you have in Britain. The art of the unexpected does not exist in America. Everything is a science, and Frankie can't really exist in that sort of climate."

The marketing strategy used to promote the group in America has been, Tony Pope admits, "far more simplistic. It's not as subtle as we've seen in Britain, because nobody gets the references. It's a different world; you listen to radio in the mid-West and they're still playing Led

Zeppelin and Bad Company. They haven't the faintest idea in hell what Frankie is all about."

Without the subtleties of marketing to aid them, Pope believes that perseverance—the tried and tested route of tours and radio exposure—is the key to American success for the group. "We're in a position now" admits Morley, "where the patterns are starting to be imposed on the group. At the beginning of 1984 we had no idea what we would be doing through the year. 1985 is already planned to the last minute. It does take a lot of the fun out of it. But it's new challenges."

Selling Jean Genet boxer shorts to the great heavy-metal hordes of Des Moines might just be Frankie Goes to Hollywood's biggest challenge yet.

Mick Brown

It is really "fab" outside Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard, where hundreds are in a line winding around the building, through the parking lot and halfway up the hill awaiting the appearance of the latest British schlock-rock spectacle, the Baskin Robbins Flavor of the Month from across the sea, the latest lads from Liverpool completing their United States tour. "They're okay now," a mid-20ish man in line remarks. "But in six months, there will be someone else."

The Palace Theater in Hollywood is sold out for the group's three-night stand beginning Monday. But this is Sunday: TV and still cameras are waiting and there's business to be done.

Frankie fans are to pass through Tower Records and have the group autograph Frankie albums and tapes and "Frankie Say" T-shirts. And if you arrive without an album, tape or T-shirt, not to worry. Plenty of sales staff are on hand to sell you Frankie paraphernalia. But leave your autograph book at home. "The band won't sign any paper," shouts a store employee, making his way up the steep hill. And if getting a Frankie autograph happens to put you in a spending mood, you're in luck. As you exit the store clutching your autographed album, tape or T-shirt, you pass a long table set up in the parking lot to sell you the Frankie stuff you don't already have or want in duplicate or triplicate. Those "Frankie Say" T-shirts are priced at \$12 and "Frankie Say" buttons at \$4, and business is booming. "This is nothing," a Frankie vendor says, "compared to what we'll do tomorrow at the Palace."

Frankie Say Frankie Gotta Make a Buck.

But a buck with honor. That Frankie Goes to Hollywood has a higher motivation than profit is surely demonstrated by the bold anti-war message fetchingly emblazoned on some of those T-shirts and buttons. Granted that it's hard taking seriously a 6-foot Boy George marching down a street in vivid drag singing, "War is stupid, people are stupid," but this is Frankie, y'know, a group with real commitment, lads trying to make the world a safer place for pleasure. You might say Frankie advocates peace through hedonism. The group is especially famous, after all, for its ractety "Two Tribes" video ("When two tribes go to war . . .") in which actors resembling Ronald Reagan and Konstantin Chernenko brawl in front

of an international audience and spark a world explosion. So it's unfair to accuse Frankie of being merely the '80s version of the Village People. Frankie is not trivial. Frankie has a heavy message. Frankie has something to say. And what it has to say is right there in big black letters on the T-shirt: "Frankie Say War! Hide Yourself."

Oh.

"We don't want to make people depressed or anything," Holly Johnson, the group's lead singer, says in a TV interview. "We just think war is a bad thing."

Frankie Goes to Hollywood rumbles up to Tower Records in a vehicle that is immediately swarmed by photographers and greeted by screaming Frankiefurters waving their T-shirts, tapes and albums like banners. Johnson is wearing a military helmet and tells the crowd, "We'll come out when you give us money!" This is a production. "Extras" in military khakis are posted outside the building. And one

that Morley could sell you the "Frankie Say" T-shirt off your back. "If there was a strategy, it was just something that we made up as we went along," Morley insisted. "I just did it the best way we could at the time." And the T-shirts? "It was just a little idea, like the equivalent of the bumper sticker in America," Morley said. "I was under a deadline and that was what I came up with. I started by putting out 100 T-shirts and pretty soon the whole world was demanding it." The slogans, Morley said, were a way to "get over a statement about this and that and the other." Including the group's anti-war, er, philosophy? "It's just a support for exhilaration," Morley said. "Just the idea of having a good time, of wanting to survive, of wanting to live."

This is a different Morley than the cynical one quoted in the *London Times*: "Great manipulation, I adore." And in the *Los Angeles Times*: "We've found that people will buy anything."



Paul Nordin

more thing. Those committed peaceniks of Frankie Goes to Hollywood, always mindful of what sells, have arrived in a tank.

The man behind Frankie Goes to Hollywood is said to be Paul Morley, the usually brash former British rock critic and now co-head of the group's record company, Zang Tuum Tumb. Frankie "is just a phenomenon," he says after the group departs the United States. "I don't know how to define it myself, to tell you the truth. They were just a bunch of entertainers that we put out to the world."

What does Frankie have that other groups don't have? Music? Charisma? Relevance? Integrity? Warts? What? "Greed and suspicion," Morley said. "I mean it. I really mean it. They have a very interesting attitude compared to other groups. They have a determination to succeed, where most other groups are happy to accept the glamour. They went out and had a little dream of their own, a British interpretation of an American dream."

The suspicion lingers that the dream embodied only a sales strategy, that Frankie is far less a music phenom than a shrewd and cynical marketing phenom,

This Morley would never con anyone. "People will buy anything—I would never say anything that stupid," he snapped. "People will buy anything that they determine is quality." And Frankie is quality, not sleight of hand and sleight of sound, not the triumph of form over content, not all wrapping and no package? "I think it's amusing that people say that," Morley said. "It is crap. People who say these things are just envious of the money being made. If it's all marketing hype, why don't they do these things themselves?" The act that opens for Frankie Goes to Hollywood at the Palace juggles and performs magic tricks for 20 minutes. Then come the Liverpools, who are on stage for an hour, led by the 24-year-old Johnson, who wears dark glasses and does indeed resemble a young Rudy Vallee. Johnson, the cavorting Paul Rutherford and the group's three musicians arrive amid swirls of smoke. Images of barbed wire and Ronald Reagan appear on a big screen behind them, reminding us that war is bad and maybe Reagan, too, because he gets into a fist fight with Chernenko in the "Two Tribes" video.

Or something like that.

continued on p. 73



Photograph by Robert Ersperson

Malcolm McLaren

Girl #1: What it is, Malcolm.

Malcolm: It's for Fans, my lovely. For those with a sparkle of wit...

Girl #1: Say what?

Malcolm: ...a joie de vivre...

Girl #1: Say what?

Malcolm: ...for those with a firmly developed sense of rhythm, history, and the absurd.

Girl #1: Say what?

Malcolm: I'd say hip-hopera is what it is.

Girl #1: Why didn't you say so.

Hip-Hopera. Brand new emotions on FANS, Malcolm McLaren's new album. Digitally determined. Masterfully maniacal. *Madam Butterfly* is the cut.



moving images

Joe Bob Briggs looks back in anger: the 10 worst drive-in movies of '84; Alex Cox takes on a bizarre love story; Egbert & Cisco review videos.

JOE BOB BRIGGS' ANNUAL TOP 10 WORST MOVIES

Joe Bob Briggs' syndicated column, "Joe Bob Goes to the Drive-in," appears in 50 papers from Honolulu to Jersey City, and is regularly banned, canceled, picketed by feminists and academics, and denounced from the pulpit for the trash that it is.

A lot of turkeys come up to me and they say, "Joe Bob, what the heck is a drive-in movie now that all the drive-ins are being turned into aerobic dancercise studios and the whole world is watching Madonna on Empty-V?"

After I finish slapping 'em around a little bit, I have to preach your basic drive-in gospel:

Numero Uno: Life is a fern bar, so let's get outta here.

Numero Two-o: The only place life is not a fern bar is at the drive-in.

Numero Three-o: They don't have any drive-ins in Communist Russia and you can see what it did to those suckers.

Numero Four-o: There's only three kinds of drive-in movies: Blood, Breasts, and Beasts. There used to be Boots, but then Bruce Lee went to that big tae kwon do academy in the sky. In the sixties there was Bikes, Beaches and Beatles. When Joan Collins was still working the drive-in, before she sold out to the teeny-weensy indoor bullstuff screen, we had Bitches. The little B's come and go, but the three big B's are eternal.

Numero Five-o: For all of the above reasons, the drive-in will never die.

To prove it, I'm bringing out my annual Drive-In Top 10, carefully selected from flicks seen exclusively like God intended, in the outdoors, in the privacy of my own automobile, a '73 metallic-blue Toronado. In '84 the American drive-in industry set new records once again: 427 breasts, 318 pints of blood, 118 beasts (down slightly from '83), 58 motor vehicle chases (28 of 'em in *Cannonball II* alone), 18 decapitations, 32 zombies. (For the complete spare-body-part report, Red Meat gradings, garbonza evaluation, and '84 roundup, write Joe Bob Briggs, P.O. Box 225445, Dallas 75222.)

Here they are, the Terrible 10, for all you perverts who can't remember your first name:

1. *The Terminator*: Arnold the Barbarian drops buck-nekkid out of the sky, turns into a National Guard Armory with legs, wastes half of El Lay, sticks a knife in his eyeball and does a little kitchen-sink surgery, gets run over by a Mack truck, and finally gets p.o.-ed enough to act nasty. The A-Man got a 77 on the Vomit Meter for his finest performance since he put the iron claw on Wilt Chamberlain in *Conan the Destroyer*.

2. *Boleto*: The flick where Bo Derek asks the question, "Is it time to get nekkid again, John?" Bo's a virgin and she can't find anybody that'll go to bed with her, so she goes to the Sahara Desert and wears a chandelier on her head until a camel jockey takes her out in the dunes and makes her shake her belly like a piece of Jimmy Dean Pork Sausage and then pours honey on her body and tries to lick it off, like he's from Key West or something, and so then she packs up her virginity and heads for the Land of the Bull and the rest is history. When her matador gets gored in the gazebo, she says, "That thing is going to work; I guarantee it"—and becomes the Oral Roberts of the drive-in, if you know what I mean and I think you do.

3. *Friday the 13th Part 4: The Final Chapter*: Some people know how to make sequels and some people don't. Like *Halloween III*, the one that had no Jamie Lee Curtis, no Donald Pleasance, and, worst of all, no psycho in a hockey mask—now that was a joke. But these *Friday the 13th* people don't just make up any old thing they want. They made the exact same movie four times in a row, and that's not easy. Red Meat Champion of 1984. Especially nice hacksaw-through-the-throat effect. Jason gets turned into a box of melted Milk Duds in the paint-the-screen finale, but don't worry about it. The world's most famous mongoloid is coming back for the Big Five.

4. *Where the Boys Are*: Best flick about stupid white people since *Summer Lov-ers*. They couldn't get Connie Francis so they hired Rod Stewart's wife, Judy Garland's other daughter, Lynn Holly Johnson without her skates, and four others. They all go down to Lauderdale, get drunk, buy an inflatable party doll, and try to keep their diaphragms on straight.

5. *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*: Let's see what happens when you take a bunch of wild savages from Malibu and stick 'em in the jungle and see if they'll eat each other. This is the flick where Tanya Roberts straddles a zebra, takes off her Danksin to reveal sub-atomic particles, gets some on-screen nookie, and still gets a PG. Sheena has animal ESP, which means she can concentrate real hard and make the elephants drop-kick Negro people into the swamp, and that's why she survives the Attack of the Killer Flamingos when they peck a helicopter to death. Includes the drive-in line of the year: "How much I love you, Sheena, so much it busts my heart."

6. *The Evil That Men Do*: When it comes to sweeping scum off the streets, there's only two people who can do it, Big Clint and Big Chuck, and half the time Big Clint is off making chimpanzee movies or telling Sondra Locke he'll buy her another stuffed elephant. That leaves Bronson, Chuck the B, who's already made like a human trash compactor in New York and El Lay. So now Jose Ferrer sends him down to Salvador to kill this



Nazi Doctor who likes to work women over with Coke bottles, rip out their intestines and stick 'em back in like a ground-glass sandwich. Chuck gets so grumpy while he's down there that he has to kill a 280-pound Meskin goon who's so rude he drinks Chuck's beer. Great crippled-midget attack in the last scene. Best Bronson of the year.

7. *Ice Pirates*: The drive-in epic of the year, with absolutely no plot to get in the way of the story. We're talking robot kung fu, *Babes of Bagdad* roller derby, Mary Crosby trying to remember whose daughter she is, Robert Urich as a beefcake pirate who narrowly escapes getting his gazebo carved off by a bear-claw steel-trap conveyor belt that gets you between the legs and turns you into a white-haired gay hairdresser in a spaghetti-strap T-shirt. Anjelica Huston dresses up like Mick Jagger, slashes off a biker's head with a bullwhip and then puts another guy's eye out because he don't sound "sincere." I won't even mention the live robots, the world's largest four-wheel drive vehicle crunching baby burros under its wheels, Samurai women on horseback, the Frog Lady, or the Space Herpy. Greatest Outer Space Bestiality Flick of the past two or three years.

8. *Human Animals*: Foreign flick of the year, banned in 49 states, witnessed by my ownself at its world drive-in premiere in Lubbock, Texas. Even the commercials were banned cause they sounded like a gang rape. What we got here is an Italian classic about the last three people left on Earth—two guys, one bimbo. Get it? Then there's a killer crab attack that rips off the bimbo's dress. Then this black-headed

goonface with a Gene Shalit mustache finishes his crab sandwich and jumps on her cookies like ugly on Lou Ferrigno. Then these three Rhodes Scholars meet a dog and become the Stupid Family Robinson. Then the bimbo begs this wimp in a white tux to rape her. Finally Miss Naples 1978 gets sick of servicing the troops and goes off in the woods with the dog. Totally disgusting. All 32 rapes are necessary to the plot.

9. *Breakin'*: The Negro Dancing classic, starring Shabba-Doo and Boogaloo Shrimp, doing steps like The Basic Skull Fracture (three times all the way around, major hair loss), The Suicide (arms straight, legs straight, ready to use your face for a Dr. Scholl's arch support), and The Permanent Brain Damage. Rhymin' and climbin', boppin' and hoppin', glidin' and slidin', jukin' and pukin'—whatever you want to call it, we're talking a whole lot of g's missing out of their words. It has a plot called "How To Teach Stupid Honkies How To Rip Up Their Danksins and Thrive on Jive," with Lucinda Dickey trying to see how much of her jumpsuit she can get bunched up around her rear end without losing her PG. Excellent pretzel-sandwich balloon-animal imitations.

10. *The Being*: Best nuclear-waste disposal flick and/or genetic-DNA mutant flick of the year. Dorothy Malone has a five-year-old son that falls into the nuclear dump, turns into a slime glopola monster, and eats half of Idaho. When the slime monster gets tired of ripping teenagers' heads off and digesting police intestines, he goes over to Ruth Buzzi's house and scissors her neck into a piece

Yoshi O'Hara

of lunchmeat and then starts drop-kicking Martin Landau around a warehouse. Martin is a scientist who keeps telling everybody there's no reason to panic, there's just a tiny bit of nuclear waste in the water supply. Finally this cop figures out the monster is indestructible except when you shine a flashlight in his eye. Just goes to show—we're talking serious slimework.

And they said the drive-in wouldn't last.

The Repo Man Strikes Again

"Nancy was a very special person, too beautiful for this world. I feel so privileged to have loved her, and been loved by her. Oh Debbie, it was such a beautiful love. I can't go on without it."

Letter from Sid Vicious to Nancy's mother Debbie Spungen.

Emilio Estevez and Harry Dean Stanton received much of the credit for the success of *Repo Man*, last year's film about sociopathic car repossessors. Its cheerful view of Los Angeles low life, whimsical narrative and right-on casting made it a cult classic. The man behind it was Alex Cox, an unassuming 30-year-old. It comes as no surprise to learn that directors Luis Buñuel and Sergio Leone are his

Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, which is why he recently moved from his L.A. base to New York's Chelsea Hotel—the scene of the crime. The rooms are sparse and the beds are covered by prickly brown spreads. You don't pay \$400 a week for the Chelsea's room service; it's for the mystique. As the historical plaques outside reveal, Dylan Thomas lived there, so did Thomas Wolfe—and although no plaque reminds you, it was in Room 100 that Nancy Spungen was stabbed to death. Cox admits he chose the Chelsea "because of the vibes." He and co-writer Abbe Wool are currently working on a screenplay about Sid and Nancy's tragic relationship, which ended when Vicious died of a heroin overdose after he had been charged with her murder. Cox might have stayed in Room 100, but it was already occupied by Lech Kowalski, who directed *D.O.A.*, the underground docudrama about the Sex Pistols.

"Anyway, it's not a story about the Sex Pistols," says Cox. "That's already been done very well by *D.O.A.* and *The Great Rock and Roll Swindle*. It's the story about the love affair between Sid, who everybody seems to have a soft spot for except those who only know his reputation for being an eater of babies, and Nancy, who gets a bad rap from a lot of people. But those who were close to her, and generally women, think Nancy was alright. Even though both were screwed up char-

acter junkies, they had something very unique, and it's that aspect of their life that shines."

To illustrate his point he reads from Buñuel's autobiography *My Last Sigh*: "In the 20s, when I was living in the residencia in Barcelona, there was a double suicide in Madrid. A student and his young fiancée killed themselves. They were known to be passionately in love, their families were on excellent terms, and when an autopsy was performed the girl was found to be a virgin. So why the double suicide? I still don't have an answer, except that perhaps a truly passionate love, a sublime love that has reached a certain peak of intensity, is simply incompatible with life itself. Perhaps it is too great, too powerful, perhaps it can only exist in death."

Cox has been interviewing the people connected with Sid and Nancy at the time of their deaths, although not Vicious' mother, Anne Beverley, "because the people who could put me in touch with her are not returning my calls," or Johnny Rotten, "because I would imagine he's pretty touchy about Sid's death and I don't wanna come on like a vulture." Cox is also aware that mystery still surrounds Spungen's death and it has never been conclusively proved that Vicious murdered her. "There was someone in the room that night," he says. "Someone ripped off their money. But if I do find out who killed Nancy, what am I gonna do? Tell the D.A.? And I can also see a set of circumstances in which Sid could have killed Nancy without even wanting to."

Cox, a mild-mannered Englishman who studied filmmaking at UCLA, was in Southern California when punk exploded in London in 1977. He returned to his native country last month to continue his research. Casting has not yet started. "I think Rosanna Arquette is a really good actress. But then I saw a picture of her done up to look like Madonna: one of the most sick-making things I have ever seen."

One wonders if the six-year-old story of Sid and Nancy will still be of interest to the mainstream moviegoing public. After all, how many records does Johnny Rotten still sell? And where are his merry men now? The urchins who turned rock 'n' roll on its head have returned to their gray streets. Whatever Cox's feelings

"I don't see it as a mindless movie for Sid Vicious clones."

about Madonna, she's the one who gazes down from bedroom walls and rules the top of the charts. "There are no fans for winos and street people," he offers, "and yet a lot of people turned out to see *Midnight Cowboy* because it was a very moving, sincere, romantic and emotional film." He could be right. He has a producer interested and plans to stick to his independent strategy. "If you can't make a good film for a million and a half dollars then you probably shouldn't be making films. Why have a stream of trailers following you everywhere and a bunch of studio executives?"

—Jessica Berens



Egbert & Cisco At the Videos

CISCO: Hi, I'm Gene Cisco, rock video critic of the *Middletown Tribune*.

EGBERT: And I'm Roger Egbert of the *Middletown Star-Ledger*.

CISCO: This month *At the Videos* we'll be looking at as much MTV as possible.

EGBERT: And somewhat at random.

CISCO: Our first video is "Lovergirl" by Teena Marie on Epic Records.

EGBERT: This is a concert video. It's pretty obvious that the music isn't coming from the people we're seeing at the time we're seeing it.

CISCO: Or maybe it never came from these people.

EGBERT: Well, this band certainly wasn't chosen for looks. Teena Marie looks sort of halfway between Grace Slick and Rick Derringer. Something is missing. It seems to be black-oriented music, but the audience is white and they're sticking their hands up in the air like a heavy metal audience.

CISCO: The lead guitarist looks just like Prince. He's wearing a lot of leopard skin. It's very '70s. Maybe it was made in the '70s and they're just showing it now. Maybe glitter is coming back. Teena Marie moves around a lot like Madonna. She has a voice kind of like Madonna's. Her name is kind of like Madonna's: Teena Marie.

EGBERT: I don't think she's a Teena anymore. She's wearing bellbottoms. I liked this video because it didn't have any images in it and it didn't have any story. I never want to see it again.

CISCO: Well, Roger, that could also be said about the '70s.

EGBERT: Exactly, I enjoyed the '70s, but I wouldn't want to live through them again.

CISCO: Next, we have "Silent Treatment." "Life on Earth." I don't know which is the group and which is the song. It starts out with a very nice chair. It's a white, wrought-iron lawn chair, a patio chair, and it's dancing. You can't hate a video that starts out with a dancing chair. This video has a lot of suspense. You don't know what's going to dance next.

EGBERT: That point-of-view shot was reminiscent of *Wolfen*. A dog's eye view. I like that. This video was great until the band showed up. Here are the chicks in tacky stockings and three Martians with cheap plastic Martian heads dressed like wild and crazy guys.

CISCO: I think this band has three members, and that the Martians must symbolize the members of the band. One plays a combination guitar-keyboard, then there's a singer and a drummer. They seem to be trying to date the three girls.



Kate Simon

Cox at the Chelsea, where Nancy was murdered.

influences, for *Repo Man* boasts Buñuel's quirky surrealism and Leone's stylized brutality. Former Monkee Mike Nesmith provided the \$1.5 million budget, partly because his own Rolls Royce had once been repossessed.

Cox attributes the film's success to the fact that, "it's funny, but the actors don't let on it's funny. It has beautiful photography and it's cohesive. This may be purely romantic on my part, but it may also be the fact that we all enjoyed ourselves. The guys who scored it—Iggy Pop and the Circle Jerks, among others—everybody was into it so much. It was different."

Low life will also be the subject of Cox's next project, *Love Kills*, a movie about

acters, neither was a monster. I think they both grew up with no real excess of affection or affection and were desperately looking for someone. They found each other, but they also encouraged each other in the worst possible way. They had an enormously sublime love coupled with a great desire to be rid of the world and of the pain of having to be separated."

An aggressive, inarticulate junkie and a vulgar groupie, who die in a bizarre suicide pact, might not seem very romantic to those who remember that Nancy and Sid were both addled by drugs and pursued sexual sado-masochism to dangerous limits. "I don't see it as a midnight movie for Sid Vicious clones," argues Cox, "and it's not for people who can't see past Indiana Jones. It's a love story about two people that ends tragically. Even though they were down-and-

EGBERT: The lead singer looks sort of like Hopalong Cassidy, except he's gay. Obviously this band doesn't play live. It's kind of hard to figure out the plot.

CISCO: It's possible that these three girls don't like Martians.

EGBERT: Oh! Now the Martians have zapped the band members with pink electric bolts from their eyes and the band members are mutating into Martians. Oh! Their clothes just fell off. Oh! Their big plastic heads just split in two and it's really the band underneath.

CISCO: It's amazing how the video doesn't go with the song.

EGBERT: The music would go better with people washing dishes. I'd say these musicians seem a little too fond of themselves. The aliens' eyes look like they were painted by Keane.

CISCO: Videos made by people who hate themselves are usually much better than videos made by people who love themselves.

EGBERT: I didn't like that video. I thought it was really ugly and stupid and I never want to see it or that band again.

CISCO: I disagree with you, violently. I thought it was really a meaningful video, and as soon as you leave I'm going to watch it again.

EGBERT: Next, we have "Penny Lover" by Lionel Richie.

CISCO: It begins with what looks like the bar on the Starship Enterprise, the bar that they never let the audience see.

EGBERT: You can't tell if this video was shot in the corner bar or the furniture section of the Museum Of Modern Art. The bouncer looks like a Polynesian drag queen. The band looks like Duran Duran. I wonder if it's Lionel's band or if he just hired model musicians for the video. The song is very traditional, like a Smokey Robinson and the Miracles-type ballad, but the song is so slow it takes forever. There's not too much editing in this video, the choreography is pretty lame and the acting is terrible. The people making it in this video don't seem like they're enjoying it. It seems like a lot of work. It's like they're saying, "Fuck me, but don't mess up my makeup." I think this video stinks. CISCO: Come off it, Roger. I think Lionel Richie deserves more credit. This video has better-than-average wigs. And what about the backup singers? One of them is snapping his fingers with his gloves on. I'll bet you couldn't snap your fingers while wearing gloves.

EGBERT: Next we have "Run to You" by Bryan Adams. It opens with footprints on what appears to be snow. It could also be the lunar surface. No, it's snow. A guitar is stuck in the snow.

CISCO: It could have used some anti-freeze.

EGBERT: And the singer could have used a facial. We switch from frozen tundra to live concert action. He's wearing a black leather motorcycle vest and a white T-shirt that looks like a size medium, not too tight. He's got some old-fashioned sunglasses. Back to the lunar surface. Back to the concert hall. Back to the lunar surface.

CISCO: It's dizzying. Would you say there were a lot of cuts in this? Did the snow switch to sand?

EGBERT: Do you think they're trying to fool us? The drummer looks like Billy Idol.



From Jonik

Now it's raining on a puddle. Do you think this is real rain?

CISCO: No, I don't think anything in this is real.

EGBERT: This guy is not Iggy Pop. The leaves are really coming down now, like you've never seen before. Too bad they're not locusts. I wonder how long it would take that many locusts to eat Bryan Adams. Uh oh, slow motion! Here comes his fashion-model girlfriend. She has fallen in the leaves. She seems to have O.D.'d. He's taking off his sunglasses. Uh-oh, his guitar is buried under the leaves.

CISCO: For everything there is a season.

EGBERT: I would say that I really hated that video and that I hate Bryan Adams and that I know everything I need to know about the guy. I never want to see him or his video again.

CISCO: Next we have "The Only Flame in Town" by Elvis Costello and the Attractions.



From Jonik

EGBERT: Lori Eastside is pretending to play the saxophone.

CISCO: Is that real glass in Elvis' glasses? What's his vision?

EGBERT: I think his glasses are real. Maybe he's shortsighted. This is a pretty cute video so far. Wow, there's Hall and Oates.

CISCO: You mean Daryl Hall.

EGBERT: It's a video cameo. Daryl Hall walks in with his fashion-model girlfriend, and with his microphone. She looks like somebody too. Is that the girl from *Liquid Sky*? Yeah, it is! Isn't it? It is! It's Anne Carlisle. The band isn't really playing, they're faking it. It's nice. The girls in the video are supposed to have won dates with the band members. They look like girls who have won dates. What kind of place are they in? A bar?

CISCO: It looks like the living room of somebody very rich. Maybe it's John Oates' living room.

EGBERT: Do you think Hall really goes out with Anne Carlisle?

CISCO: Maybe Hall and Oates go out with her.

EGBERT: Do you think Hall and Anne are really kissing? It looks like she's got her thumb over her open mouth. She wouldn't really put her lips on his.

CISCO: What's wrong with his lips?

EGBERT: Nobody kisses on the lips anymore—AIDS. Lori Eastside's fake sax playing is really good. Hey, the girls are letting their hair down and taking off their glasses, and in fact they all look like Elite models, not contest winners. It's the old trick: "Why Miss Smith, without your glasses you're . . . beautiful." I like this one very much. I would like a date with Anne Carlisle and Lori Eastside.

CISCO: Next we have the award winning "You Might Think" by The Cars.

EGBERT: I think this is one of the worst videos I have ever seen.

CISCO: I think this is one of the best. I really like the special effects. I like when the band is in the medicine cabinet playing on the second shelf next to the underarm deodorant and the toothpaste.

EGBERT: What I like best is Ric Ocasek's haircut.

CISCO: But the girl in the dentist's chair is really pretty.

EGBERT: I bet girls go for nose jobs and take this video with them to show the doctor and say "this is the nose I want." It's a very pert nose.

CISCO: You mean you don't like it when she twists her lipstick and Ric comes out? You don't like it when he lifts her up like he's King Kong on top of the Empire State Building?

EGBERT: Yeah, I guess I'm starting to like it now.

CISCO: Really, why?

EGBERT: It's beating itself into me. She is pretty.

CISCO: What about when Ric's flying around her like a fly? They cast this really well. He looks just like a fly.

EGBERT: Do you think he knows her in real life? I do like it when the tiny car drives up under the covers on the bed.

CISCO: Yeah, especially when the car flattens her.

EGBERT: Do you think this video degrades women?

CISCO: I think it's one of the few that doesn't. Don't you like it when he's singing the duet with her in a boat in the sink?

EGBERT: I guess what I really hate is the song. I guess I like the video. I like it when someone pulls the plug and they go down the drain.

CISCO: Next we have "I Ran" by Flock of Seagulls.

EGBERT: A real haircut band. These guys all look like sex-change dental assistants. The guy with the red shirt and the most poofed-up hair must be the leader. He's absolutely terrifying. He looks like Charles Laughton trying to look like Sandra Dee. He is approached by something in makeup, heavy makeup. Is that a girl?

CISCO: Yes. Is that other one a girl?

EGBERT: No, the guitar player is a boy.



The other thing is a girl. Sort of a Japanese Sumo Bride of Frankenstein look. CISCO: This is done with mirrors. Rotating mirrors. Here come some zombie girl dancers. EGBERT: Their dresses look like they're made out of garbage bags. CISCO: I think that's positive. EGBERT: Recycled girls? The drummer has quite a widow's peak. He looks like Eddie of the Munsters with a butch and dye job. CISCO: How much do you think this video cost to make? EGBERT: Not much. It looks like it was made in a garage. There's a lot of cheap dry ice smoke. If they had used car exhaust instead of dry ice this would have been the last video the Flock of Seagulls ever made. CISCO: It's odd that no haircut band has ever actually made a video in a barbershop. Next we have Don Henley's "Boys of Summer." This is in black and white. It's a beautiful beginning. A great beach, a great guy, a great girl. Don Henley used

to be in the Eagles. It's not a very good rock 'n' roll name, but that's the trend now. EGBERT: This black and white looks really nice. It looks like the beginning of *The Outsiders* or *Rumblefish*. Now he's moving down the street singing and the camera is dolly with him. This is a classic shot. His feet are out of frame but they're obviously not moving. This is like the classic duet shot in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. It's a great, mysterious shot. CISCO: Then there's an eight-year-old or so kid playing drums. This is very artistic. What city are they in? EGBERT: Looks like Tulsa. CISCO: With a beach? EGBERT: Must be Duluth. There are some really good-looking people in this. There is a gold lame dress that could be silver. CISCO: The song seems to be about trying to sort it all out. Wow, look at her. EGBERT: She's inviting. CISCO: Here's another bar scene. Almost every video has a bar scene in it. There must be some connection between bars and videos. EGBERT: Yeah, everybody in America is drunk. CISCO: This video is very nice. It's kind of surreal and introspective. There seems to be a message. It's about how you can never look back. There are beautiful waves in this. EGBERT: And nice kissing. CISCO: Convincing. I didn't mind this video. EGBERT: No, I'd say this is the best we've seen. By far. I could see it again.

CISCO: I'll agree with you on that. EGBERT: Next we have "Stranger in Town" by Toto. Here's another black and white. Here's another dog's point-of-view shot. CISCO: It begins like a good TV movie, where the police bloodhounds are after the escaped criminal. Which is also the case in this video. We see the scene of a crime: a room strewn with evidence of a struggle. There's a chalk mark on the floor where the body lay and the chalk outline gets up to dance. That's great. This is a very good video. EGBERT: It's interesting that a group named after a dog, Toto, would have dogs in its video. Look, and there's even a scarecrow. CISCO: And the main character looks a little like a lion. A bit like Bert Lahr. Is he the lead singer? EGBERT: He must be. He has an interesting face. CISCO: Sort of a cross between Julian Beck and Bert Lahr. It's good casting all the way around. It's a good fugitive movie. The clothes and sets are consistent. EGBERT: It's artfully shot. A sort of Edward Hopper look combined with film noir. Even the kids look like real kids. CISCO: Next is "Cry Baby" by Utopia from the *Oblivion* album. This is Todd Rundgren's group, one of the pioneers of video rock. EGBERT: It starts out in some kind of forbidden zone, like a nuclear waste dump or testing ground. A guy climbs out of a hole into the glowing wasteland, maybe from a shelter. Cut to a sort of indoor

"If they had used car exhaust instead of dry ice, this would have been the last video Flock of Seagulls ever made."

Club Med scene with new-wave hula girls and hula boys too. They're all dressed in white, like the Eloi waiting for the Morlocks in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. CISCO: Todd Rundgren looks just like Joel Tournagene. EGBERT: Who's that? CISCO: Just some guy I know. This looks sort of like Roman times. EGBERT: Except after a nuclear war. It's all in some kind of greenhouse. The hula Eloi are playing with some kind of Russian constructivist parlor game with brightly colored geometric shapes. The lone desperate survivor refugee is on the outside of the greenhouse looking in. Inside they're eating sushi in the future. Oooh! Wow! Todd's blond girlfriend got mad and threw her sushi on all the other girls. They're not happy. They have sushi and potted plants in a nuclear wasteland and they're not happy. This guy is outside in the nuclear wasteland and he just wants in, but these spoiled brats are sitting in this nice pad eating sushi and they're miserable. Maybe the don't like their re-

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cord label. Is that Carly Simon?
CISCO: It's just a girl with big lips.
EGBERT: Oh, man! The people want to get out. Why? No more sushi? It's burning up outside.
CISCO: Something's burning. Is that the refugee? The world? There's an explosion. Something's burning in the desert outside and inside it's raining. They're unhappy. Maybe they're out of makeup.
EGBERT: Well, Gene, I think that's all we have time for this month.
CISCO: Don't forget to tune in again "At the Videos."

Gene Cisco and Roger Egbert are close friends of Scott Cohen and Glenn O'Brien.

DISNEY GETS DOWN: I WANT MY DTV

I was watching "Hill Street Blues" on a recent Thursday night, quietly ruminating such pertinent questions as, "Can Joyce Davenport cook?" when I was jolted upright by a commercial. There before me was Donald Duck in his prime, shaking his tail feathers to the breakneck strains of Little Richard's immortal "Tutti Frutti." After watching Donald bounce his little duck derrière on the floor in perfect sync with Richard's inspired cry, "whomp-bop-a-loo-bop-a-lop-barn-boom," I was in no condition to return to the grim realities of The Hill.

Some might feel this was an overreaction to what was, after all, just an ad for DTV, a new line from Walt Disney Home Video. But the occasion seemed momentous: two of the great monoliths of our culture, Disney and rock 'n' roll, had been wed. And while it wasn't exactly a shotgun wedding—the ad I saw was part of a carefully planned campaign, supposedly the first national TV campaign for a home video—the potential power of this marriage was great enough to offset my usual skepticism. I wanted my DTV!

Subsequent viewings of the first three DTV titles, *Pop & Rock*, *Golden Oldies* and *Rock, Rhythm & Blues*, revealed that, although Donald Duck's "Tutti Frutti" is an obvious highlight, it is by no means a fluke.

Some other memorable examples of DTV synergy:

- Old King Cole (who was a very old soul, remember?) addressing the multitudes, yelling "Is everybody ready?" the multitudes responding "Yeah!!" and his majesty leading the entire kingdom into "Mickey's Monkey" (Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, 1963).
- Donald Duck struggling to raise nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie and The Beach Boys sing "When I Grow Up (To Be a Man)" (1964).
- Shirley Temple, Minnie Mouse and Carmen Miranda doing the samba to The Diamonds' Latin-tinged "Little Darlin'" (1957).
- Pluto rescuing his canine paramour from the dog pound to the tune of "Reach Out I'll Be There" by The Four Tops (1966). (Pluto is also prominently featured during

an Elvis Presley number, proving that he is the ultimate "Hound Dog.")

These video clips work on several levels. The animation is technically and aesthetically staggering. For anyone who grew up in the '50s and '60s, even those who long ago abandoned cartoons as a primary form of entertainment, characters such as Snow White and Pinocchio still conjure up deep-seated memories. Likewise, songs such as "Up Tight" (Stevie Wonder) and "Sixteen Tons" (Tennessee Ernie Ford) possess great intrinsic power and evoke an earlier, simpler—maybe better—time.

Richard Fried, Director of Marketing for Disney Home Video sums up the appeal of DTV succinctly: "Little kids see it as cartoons. Teenagers see it as music video. And adults see it as nostalgia." So what took 'em so long? Surely, the explosion of the music video market provides the primary *raison d'être* for DTV, but the Disney studios have historically been ultra-conservative in their choice of music. Walt Disney was more responsible than anyone else for teaching two generations of American kids what little they know about classical music and snippets from his Silly Symphonies series, launched in 1929, are re-used to great effect throughout the DTV tapes. Otherwise, the most radical Disney ever got was to include Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in *Fantasia* (now an incredible, time-defying 45 years old). Unlike some other cartoon studios, which used top jazz players to enhance characters like Betty Boop, Disney's taste in pop ran more to the likes of Brenda Lee, Nelson Eddy, Dinah Shore and The Andrews Sisters. Even with "The Mickey Mouse Club" in the mid-50s, when the rock phenomenon could not be ignored any longer, Disney's version of rock remained distinctly homogenized and chaste. Disneyland's answer to Elvis was Annette Funicello.

For all its delight, then, DTV is a sure sign that rock music has been totally assimilated into the American mainstream. And, though the choices are sensational most of the songs fit easily within Disney's family-oriented scheme. Rest assured, we will never see Mickey Mouse dancing to the tune of "Revolution" or "Eve of Destruction." (Though I'd love to see Pluto's woofers turned on by The Ramones.)

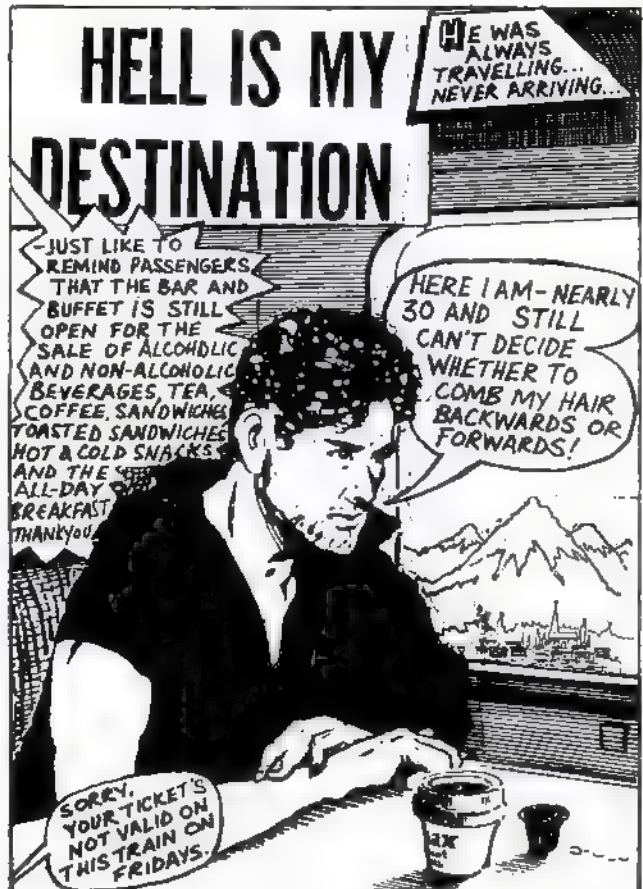
Purists might argue that the pristine Disney creations are better left in their original contexts. But if the DTV tapes have something of the disjointed, packaged quality of MTV, they still display more imagination and skill than the best rock videos. The Disney folks deserve credit for sticking primarily with classic, original songs (even a juvenile entry like Annette's "Tall Paul" can be forgiven when there's a Paul Bunyan feature in the can.) And they skillfully match existing video and audio tapes without seriously bastardizing either one.

Disney Home Video promises more DTV this Spring, delving into Big Band jazz as well as more rock and R&B. Although sales will ultimately determine how far DTV is allowed to go, the possibilities are limitless. Even if you don't see DTV as monumental, there is no denying it's great entertainment.

—Gary Kenton



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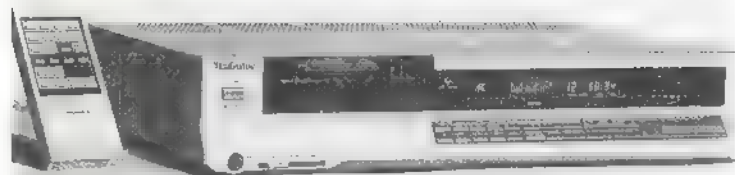
In the last few years, the U.S. has seen a dramatic increase in the number of people who are taking their own lives. In fact, suicide is now the second leading cause of death in the United States, and it is the leading cause of death for young people. The good news is that there are many ways to help people who are struggling with mental health issues. One of the most important things you can do is to listen to them. When someone is struggling, they need to know that they are not alone and that there are people who care about them. You can help by simply listening to them and letting them know that you are there for them. You can also help by encouraging them to seek professional help. There are many resources available to help people who are struggling with mental health issues, and it is important to know where to go for help. If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out for help. You are not alone, and there is hope.



Art by Mara McAfee reproduced courtesy of National Lampoon.

STATE OF THE ART

Compact Discs: sound of the future. Plus, a man who seems to come from the future, Robert Fripp, writes about guitars.



COMPACT DISCS— LESS IS MORE

by Edward Rasen

Compact discs and compact disc players are the hottest things to hit the audio market since cassette tapes and players. However, this new technology, commonly referred to as "CD," offers more than convenience. CD provides a quality of sound that far exceeds records and tapes. Compact disc digital audio technology reproduces sound with remarkable accuracy, clarity and a dynamic range up to 90db, without distortion and surface noise such as "pops" and "ticks."

CD brings the sonic refinement of state-of-the-art recording studios to the general public. The process is complex, but basically, music is translated into numbers and encoded on a disc only 4.7 inches in diameter (approximately one-third the size of a conventional 12-inch vinyl record), which is coated with a protective layer of plastic. The numbers are "read" by a laser beam in the CD player and translated back to music. There isn't any contact between the disc and the player, so feedback and distortion from the turntable and normal record wear from a stylus is eliminated.

There are other dramatic differences between compact discs and conventional records. The compact disc is played

on only one side; however, that one side holds 74 minutes of information, so you can listen without interruption to an entire album.

The growing popularity of CD has convinced the record companies to release more recordings in this format. More than 5,000 CD titles are scheduled for release during 1985 and 1986. However, many reissues will only be as good as the original recording. CD can eliminate record surface noise and turntable feedback, but it cannot improve the original recording. Don't expect tremendous clarity and dynamic range from an old Bob Dylan or Janis Joplin album.

However, Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab has already solved that problem. Famous for the critically acclaimed Original Master Recordings in record and cassette format, Mobile is issuing CDs using its exclusive analog-to-digital master tape transfer process, which duplicates and improves the sound of original master recording tapes.

The first Woodstock album, featuring more than three hours of live music from the legendary 1969 music festival, has been transferred directly from the original master tapes of performances by Jimi

Hendrix, The Who, Jefferson Airplane, Joe Cocker, Santana, Crosby Stills Nash & Young, and others. Additionally, Woodstock (\$80) is the first CD release to feature the new High Reliance (HR) surface coating, which provides greater resistance to abrasions and warpage. The HR/CDs are particularly suited for warm-weather climates and portable CD players.

Sony is in the forefront of the portable CD player market, offering the Walkman-style portable D-5 (\$300), the CDX-5 (\$600), an in-dash player for cars, and the CDX-R7 (\$700), which is basically the CDX-5 with an AM-FM radio.

But the real action is in the home player market. During 1983 and 1984, approximately 400,000 CD players were sold in the United States, and sales for 1985 are expected to exceed 500,000 units. Since prices decrease as sales volume increases, that is great news for the consumer. Prices for home CD players now range from as low as \$199 to more than \$1,000.

Sony was the first manufacturer to market a home CD unit to the general public; the CDP-111 is presently its top-of-the-line. But NEC, Yamaha, Denon, Carver, and Technics are now the leaders in CD players for the home. As with most things, not all CD players are equal—the quality of sound varies according to model and manufacturer. On some, the music can sound harsh, edgy, and two-dimensional, lacking depth and detail. However, some manufacturers have addressed those problems. NEC's CD-705E (\$995) has been cited for superior sonic performance by numerous audio publications. NEC is also offering the lower-priced CD-607E (\$599). Both units feature digital filtration to enhance sound reproduction. Unlike conventional CD players that use analog filtration, which can cause phase distortion by cutting high frequencies too sharply, the NEC CD players digitally remove unnecessary information without the chopping effect, producing cleaner, smoother sound.

Another NEC improvement is in the switching devices used to separate signals into left and right channels. While conventional CD players place rather slow-operating switches in the signal path, which can diminish sound quality, NEC CD players use a high-speed switching circuit that bypasses the signal path, resulting in less high-frequency distortion and, again, smoother, clearer sound.

Many of the features of the NEC CD-705E have been incorporated into the CD-607E. These include the option to play up to 15 tracks in any preselected order, ultra high-speed track-to-track access, a search feature for instant access to next or previous tracks or any designated track, a repeat function, and multi-mode time display that shows total playing time of program tracks, elapsed time of the track in play, remaining playing time of the track in play, elapsed time from the beginning of the disc, and remaining playing time of the disc.

The Carver CD player (\$650), with the Carver Digital Time Lens, is the first player built to address the problems of bright, hot, harsh midrange sounds and lack of ambience and spatial detail, which are

characteristic of most compact discs currently available. The Carver player corrects the ratio of left-to-right channel information and restores the octave-to-octave balance of the original recording. Most compact discs carry 33 percent less ambience information than normal records. That reduction in three-dimensional imaging and other acoustic factors diminishes the realism of the recorded music. Bob Carver's Digital Time Lens restores the original balance created by the musician and recording engineer.

The Carver CD player features a random memory selector that allows programming of selections in any desired order; track search that provides quick access to any track; and high-speed scanning that provides almost instant access to specific passages. The Carver Digital Time Lens is available as a separate component for those who own other players.

The Technics line from Panasonic is going after both the home and professional markets. Technics SL-P50 (\$4,000) is designed to meet the needs of radio stations and audio professionals. Needless to say, technical specs are incredible: dynamic range of more than 96db, ruler-flat frequency response, and no wow or flutter. A graphic fluorescent display shows the location of each track on the disc, the location where disc play will begin, and the current location of the pickup. A start location display indicates the track number, index number, time (in minutes and seconds), and frame number that the operator selects via a keyboard. The actual start location can be made by three methods: by numeric pads, with a search dial, or with an automatic music detection system, which is accurate to 13.3 milliseconds (just slightly more than 1/100th of a second). These are just a few of its features.

Technics is attacking the home market with the SL-P3, (\$600), the SL-P2 (\$500), and the SL-P1 (\$400). The SL-P3 features a multi-function wireless remote control with 15-track random programming, repeat function, auto pause, auto cue, and volume output level control with LED level indicator. Programming, volume, scanning, and repeat functions can be adjusted with the wireless control. Forward and reverse search keys operate at high and low speeds and provide cueing sounds. The auto music scan allows listeners to preview the first few seconds of each track.

A unique feature of the SL-P3 is a large fluorescent display with 15-bar horizontal "shorthand" graphics that visually chart the tracks. The display also shows the track number, index number, and both total and remaining time, in minutes and seconds.

The SL-P3 is equipped with a headphone jack that has a separate volume control and an automatic play timer. The SL-P2 has most of the features of the P3, including wireless remote control. The SL-P1 does not offer wireless remote.

Remember, the sound from a CD varies from player to player. Moreover, it is important that the dynamic range of CD is accurately transmitted through a preamplifier to your speakers. There is no reason to expect great sound if cheap, inefficient wiring is used to connect com-

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ponents. Monster Cable Products of San Francisco has developed Interlink CD interconnecting cables (\$50 per 1-meter pair) that will significantly improve the sound of any CD player. The cables are manufactured to compensate for the transient and phase distortions in the filtering. The sonic improvements are impressive. The sound is more coherent, bass is tighter, and the musical highs and lows are more precisely reproduced. Monster Cable is so confident about Interlink CD that it is offering a complete money-back guarantee if you return the product within 30 days. Monster Cable also manufactures quality speaker cables.

CD is here to stay, and you can expect more improvement in the technology. The next generation of home players will play both music and video discs. Both Pioneer and Teac plan to begin marketing combo players (\$1,200) during 1985. Sony and Sanyo have demonstrated combo players at the Japan Audio Fair but haven't decided to market them in the U.S. Digital CD is a quantum leap ahead of previous recording and playback methods. Are you ready for the experience?



GUITARS

by Robert Fripp

There are three stages in the history of electric guitar playing. The first electric guitar, going back to the late 1920s—early 1930s, was really an acoustic guitar, but a little louder, and it had a characteristic "cottonball" sound which remained until the early 1960s. In the second stage, the electric guitar became an electric guitar, as we know it today—and people like Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, and Jimi Hendrix made it an instrument on its own terms, with feedback and so on. The third stage is the synthesizer guitar. There were different early approaches, but the first really successful one for the performing guitarist was the Roland GR-300, circa 1981. Although not a very sophisticated synthesizer, it was a workable instrument. They have since modified that with the GR-700, which is more complex, but in terms of being a player's instrument, the response is not as crisp as the earlier

model. The sound is more varied, but the instrument is more difficult to play.

The finest guitar I ever played is my Gibson Les Paul Custom 1959 model, but I don't use that for my synthesizer guitar work; for that I use the Roland GR-300. The guitar itself is made by Ibanez. The guitar sends a signal into a bank of high-tech effects and then into an amplifier. The state-of-the-art hardware at the moment is the electronics that the guitar goes into. It's the only one of its kind and is currently being custom-built for me by Tony Arnold, who has a small studio in Dorset, England, called Arnie's Shack. What Tony is building is not a synthesizer bank at all, but a sophisticated effects unit into which one can plug either an electric guitar or synthesizer guitar. Instead of a battery of effects lying around the floor or on tables and flight cases, he puts the circuits of any particular effects onto a circuit board and rack-mounts them. So instead of lots of objects all over the floor—which you step on to bring to life (the foot switches, etc.)—they all stand side by side in a box in racks, and the different configurations in which they can be used are coordinated by a computer with digital display. You punch in a combination number which activates different effects. Instead of having three or four different kinds of fuzz boxes, all of which are difficult to find, he will take each different model of fuzz and use the print diagram on the original circuit to reconstruct it on a new printed circuit. He can even put four different classic fuzz boxes on the one printed circuit—and this is one small effect on the rack. This makes a unit that's very mobile and easy to operate.

At the end of their last tour, King Crimson had something like 120 different foot switches spread between three people on the front line. The drummer was also pressing foot switches. We didn't step on each other's feet, but we did tread on our own! Tony is putting in a computer so you can punch in the different numerical codes to activate different combinations of effects. You can then put your synthesizer signal from the GR-300 or -700 into the effects' rack-mounting to get treatments, fuzzes, echoes, etc., and from that point the signal goes to the amplifier. That is the state-of-the-art regarding the synthesizer guitar.

What interests me is the state-of-the-art of the musician, which receives less attention. Take the phrase "state-of-the-art," and play with the words a little. I would say firstly that art is the capacity to reexperience one's innocence. In terms of state, that is a very different state than the one we normally go about our lives in—rushing about, earning a living, and all the rest. We are not actually in a state where the quality of music is present. We have to be in a different state: a state of art, where we're in touch with ourselves for the possibility that the quality of music can come along. For the musician, it's a question of working with one's hands, one's head, and one's heart to a point where these are the instruments that music plays. The aim of the musician is to find a balance between the hands, head, and heart, with the instrument obviously being a part of that. Then the quality of music can play the human instrument.

Favourite Musicians

LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM
LENNY CASTRO
RAY COOPER
DUCK DUNNE
NATHAN EAST
JAMES NEWTON HOWARD
JAMIE OLDAKER
MICHAEL OMARTIAN
GREG PHILLINGANES
JOHN ROBINSON
PETER ROBINSON
CHRIS STANTON

Favourite Producers

PHIL COLLINS
TED TEMPLEMAN
LENNY WARONKER

Favourite Guitar Player

ERIC CLAPTON



Favourite Album

BEHIND THE SUN



ERIC CLAPTON'S NEW STUDIO ALBUM, *BEHIND THE SUN*, IS ON WARNER BROS. RECORDS, CASSETTES & COMPACT DISCS.

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lowriders

If you can't afford a new car that goes fast, you buy a car for 50 bucks and see how slow you can go.

by David Lee Roth

The coolest thing to do is get a sled and drive that baby down by the high school at about 12 mph with the skid plates shooting sparks out the back. When you're the coolest you walk slow. When you're really casual you're not running anywhere. You're on a stroll.

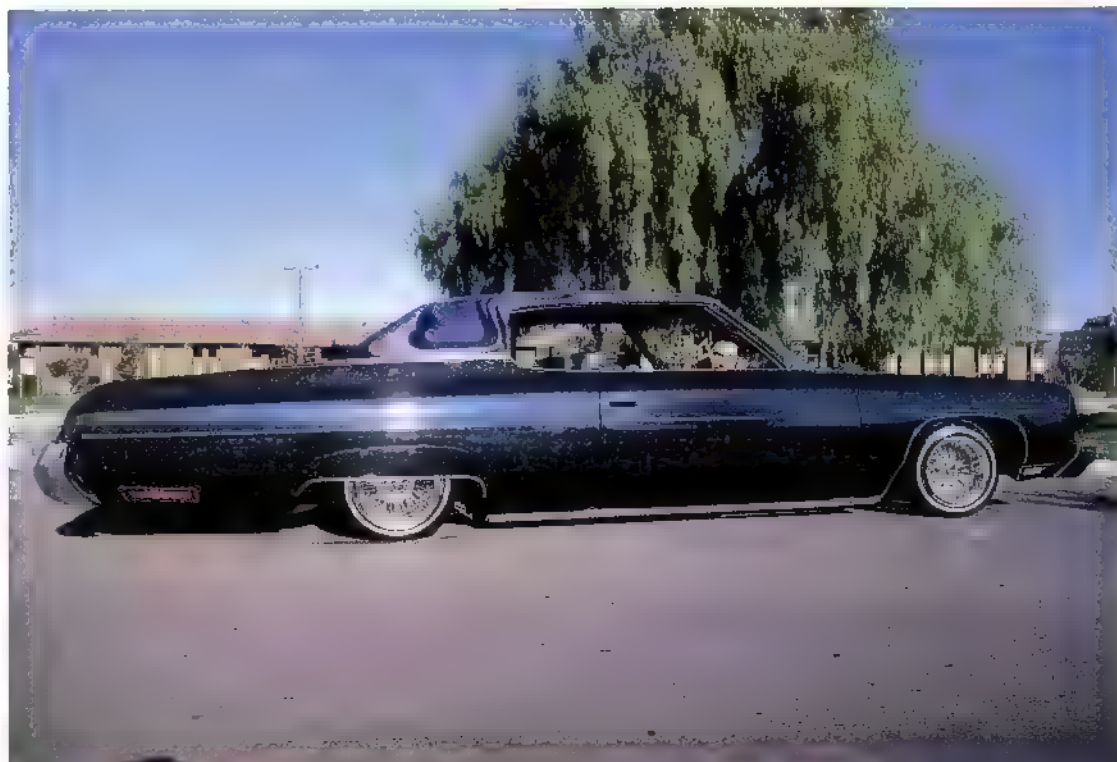
You got angel hair, which is like fur, all over the dash, on the ceiling, the floors and the doors. You got custom door handles and custom doorknobs made out of mahogany. The steering wheel is real small, about the size of a small pizza, and if you're really cool you get a welded chain for a steering wheel. You hang all sorts of stuff off the rearview mirror, like fuzzy dice or a plastic Jesus, but you got to hang something off of there. Then you put some pipes in the back dash and you pipe in the music and put the name of your club in the back window. Now that's class.

The tires are skinny. As skinny as you can get. The surfers, hippies and red-necks go for big tires and they jack the back end up way into the sky like a rooster tail, but you can do the opposite and lower it way down and put on the skinniest tires you possibly can. Instead of wearing a great big diamond ring, you wear a little tiny one. But you can drive too fast on skinny tires and they will fold. You got air shocks so you raise the car when the cops come and when you stop you just let her drop in the back, and if you're real cool, in the front too . . . If you're driving along and see some girls checking you out, you drop the car down to the street and the skid plates on the bottom keep you from tearing the oil pan and all the sparks shoot out.

A classy car to have is an early '60s Cutlass or a Chevy Impala and then you take all the paint off and paint it primer gray. You get that dusty finish to it, like if you rubbed it you'd think the dust would come off in your hand. It's like battleship gray and you keep it that color until you can afford a \$600 candy-apple or midnight purple, twelve-coat, hand-rubbed lacquered paint job. It's like an art object. It's people's art because you exhibit it in the street. You build it at home and then exhibit it. You got a day job and this is what you put your money into. You obviously don't decorate the pad when you're living in three rooms with the family.

You don't drive on the freeway because on the freeway there ain't nobody watching you from the side. Anyway, you don't drive fast. You drive slow. Obviously you don't drive this way when you're getting your unemployment check, because you got to get there quick.

You never get speeding tickets. But



Larry Gonzalez

you're always getting popped for the car being too low, or tires being too skinny, or for an obstructed dash because you got things hanging on the front and you can't see out the window, or for disturbing the peace, or for obstructing traffic, but usually they can't pop you for obstructing traffic because they're seven cars behind you.

Everyone's into the sport of the cruise. You're going five mph and you pump the brake so the car jiggles and you see who can bump and grind the best. You see who's got the neatest car and who can shoot the most sparks. You rev it up to 'bout 30 mph and then you slow down and cruise and the whole street clears in front of you. You go 30 mph and then you drop it and see who got the best spark show. It's screaming metal on asphalt and the people cheer on the side of the road. That's the coolest.

If some creep's tailgating you because you're moving too slow, you pull over to the side and as he passes you, you slink down in your seat so just your eyebrows show over the window and you give a look, like, "who are you lookin' at?" A lot of people take the back seat out of

*"You're going five mph
and you pump the
brakes and so
the car jiggles and
you see who
can bump and grind
the best."*

their car and put a kind of cushion affair in the back so just a bare eyebrow shows out of the back window and that's cool, because you're in your capsule.

You're into a sporty look because the whole name of the game is leisure. You wear a khaki jacket, some khaki pants and some nice shoes, with a sweater that has a little suede on the front and see-through socks. You gotta have some see-through socks with maybe some rib in 'em, like black see-throughs with a little orange pipping, ribbed.

Usually when you park the car you park in a line down the street. The longer the line the better, especially if every car is painted the same. That's the coolest. Then

you hang out and open the doors and play the stereo with the Vibrasonic on it, hang out with the girls, smoke a little, drink a little and pass the time.

It's pretty important where you park and who you carry in the car with you. If you got a girl, she got to be as absolutely close to you as possible. You sit in couch seats. How can you relax in bucket seats? You got to have six-way couch seat—up, down and sideways. When the seat is all the way back on the sixth way, you can barely reach the steering wheel, barely see out the front window, barely see out the side one. You can only cruise when you're in the sixth position. So when you're ready to cruise you slow down and let the seat back so you're at the right angle and then you get your chick as close to you as you can. Otherwise you get as many dudes as you can squeeze into the car. There's got to be a lot of hilarity and you got to make sure the music can be heard outside the car, unless you have tinted windows, in which case you put the speakers into the wheel-wells. You play soul, disco and a lot of Santana. Music is very important because that's the soundtrack. Music makes it go.



Going down hard with the Replacements.

REPLACEMENTS from p. 26

emphasize what was really soulful about their music. They are soulful."

The *Longest Day* is still raw, but the Del Fuegos' soulful sting was brought to the fore and the excess garbage eliminated. Froom's production reveals the ragged emotion in plaintive tunes like "Have You Forgotten?" ■ ballad Zanes sings with barely restrained anger. "You said your love was true/Have you forgotten?/All I tried for you/Have you forgotten . . . all those promises that you made?/Just like the wind, they all blew away." Before the Fuegos encountered Froom, they would have clubbed listeners with the song's pain. Now they share.

Froom forced more than musical issues with the Del Fuegos. Once the boys stopped hammering their music, they had to stop bludgeoning their brains, too. "I just asked them, 'What's the point getting up there if you're not going to play well?'"

The transformation was not only in their music, but in their attitude as well. "We were into learning a song during sound check and playing it during the set," says Zanes. "But it was just a mess. We think of it this way now; if the choice is between winning people over and driving them out the door, we'd rather win them over. It's a pretty calculated thing. But it's not like we calculate our fun, just because we now know how we're gonna rock, it doesn't take away from the fun. It actually gives us a little more space to work. 'I'm much happier about it now. And I'm not as drunk, so I can realize how happy I am!'"

And the Del Fuegos are discovering that this straight approach is winning them new fans. Last year, they won the listeners poll on the Boston's suburbs' number-one AOR station, WAAR, as the Bay Area's best band, beating the Cars, the J. Geils Band and other Boston heavyweights.

"We're into the idea of a slightly different moral code, even though it's something that should never be preached about, but just talked about," says Dan Zanes. "Things like not cheating on your girl; a lot of things rock 'n' roll tends to

go pretty wild over, like picking up girls after the show as a way of life. Or staying fucked up as a way of life. We're talking about a different kind of thing. More like, how it's cool to be loyal and to respect each other. I guess it has to do with love."

That, not the craziness, is what shows on stage and on their record. And friendship is magnetic; it makes the Del Fuegos and the Replacements real to an audience. And it may make them successful.

FRANKIE from p. 61

There is enormous energy on stage and in the youngish crowd as Frankie runs through the familiar numbers. They tend to sound alike and Johnson like a crooner given to continual expressions of "Whoh-whoh-whoh." "Two Tribes" at the Palace is a pale imitation of "Two Tribes" on video, as the message on the big screen on stage announces: "Frankie Say Bomb Is A Four-Letter Word."

And there is a lot of winking, sniggering sexual innuendo on stage, matching the gay reputation of Rutherford and

Johnson. Says Johnson, "I don't like straight sex, y'know." The group's smash hit, "Relax," is accompanied on screen by photographs of two androgynous figures engaged in various sex acts. "Did you come?" Johnson asks afterward. "Do you know what Crisco is for?" he asks. "They do in San Francisco."

Whoh-whoh-whoh.

The concert ends undramatically. "That was very good for me," Johnson says, coyly. "Was it good for you?" The once-boisterous throng quietly departs. There is no aftertaste. The energy in the hall evaporates almost immediately and reappears in the lobby, where the four letter word is "Sale."

"One girl bought \$175 worth of T-shirts," reports one of three vendors facing a crush of 200 Frankie fans, some of whom are staring glassy-eyed at the \$12 T-shirts displayed on the wall as if they were watching God. It's a McDonalds atmosphere. "Gimme two large T-shirts, two buttons and a poster."

To go.

Two girls are deciding which buttons to buy. "I like war!" "Me, too. I want war!" What is the meaning of "Frankie Say War! Hide Yourself?" One of the girls pauses momentarily, then replies: "Huh?"

Before the group returned to England, Johnson stopped by MTV to tape "The Holly Johnson Guest VJ Hour." Heavily promoted on MTV as an electrifying event of momentous significance, Johnson appeared in a coonskin cap and his usual dark glasses. He stroked the tail on his cap. He said Bette Midler was "fab." He said Andy Warhol was "really fab." He introduced some songs. And then, like all traces of Frankie Goes to Hollywood, he was gone.

There is a lot of winking, sniggering and sexual innuendo on stage. Afterwards, Johnson says, "That was very good for me. Was it good for you?"



FELA from p. 39

wrongdoings, and shit like that which I can't stop . . . ooh, I feel so bad! Human beings have a purpose in this world. And if you do not do what you're supposed to do, you will die young and come back again! Death doesn't worry me. I will do my part. Then I'll just go, man . . . just go!

"After they put me in that jail cell with the people they call criminal, I started thinking, 'Who jails Society when it does horrors to people?'"



Courtesy Caligaid Records

"You know how people are brought up thinking that jail is just for criminals, man. For people who've 'gone against society' . . . you know what I mean? That law-and-order shit! But after they put me in that cell with the people they call 'criminals,' I started thinking: 'Who the fuck is Society? Who jails Society when it does horrors to people? Why does Society do nothing to help people, to provide jobs and keep people from having to steal just to chop? Why don't Society fight against corruption, punish the powerful?' I concluded to myself: 'Fuck Society, man, it's unjust!' I knew I would be in jail for another ten years 'cause the shit they had on me carried ten motherfucking years, man. But still I said, 'fuck Society.'"

So, Fela sits in jail. Amnesty International is investigating his case and benefit concerts featuring African guests Manu Dibango and Toure Kunda are being planned for Paris, London and Rome. A major Fela benefit is slated for the U.S. in the Spring. His band continues to play in Nigeria. And with his new LP, with its oddly appropriate focus on indictments, cross-examinations and crimes, his voice is far from stilled.

The back cover of *Army Arrangement* sports jail cell bars. Fela's in jail again. But not his spirit, they can't jail that.



Ghoulies and
Goths dance to
the deadly
sounds of
Christian Death,
.45 Grave,
Jimmy Smack,
Dead Hippy,
and Geza X. If
you thought
punk was hard-
core, you're in
for a shock.

Article and
photographs by
Edward Rasen

Left and top right:
Jimmy Smack, in and
out of costume.
Bottom right: Simon
Smallwood, the lead singer
of Dead Hippy, as a
hauntingly persistent
bad memory.
Next page: the morbidly
alluring Dinah Cancer,
vocalist of .45 Grave.

IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH ROCK?



Death and destruction are in her eyes and all she does is spread her thighs." Slides of mutant zombies flash against a wall, enveloping ghoulish belly dancers performing strange rites. Powerful bass-dominated rhythms and melodic electronic feedback mix with clinking finger-cymbals. Suddenly, the lights dim, and from the darkness emerges a painted skeleton wearing only a kilt and hooded cape. A cowbell clangs. Jimmy Smack has arrived. Eerie synthesized sounds from a black box mesmerize the audience, while a deep, bass voice slowly recites doomsday lyrics.

Your job is a bore
you just stare at the floor
the winos in the alley intrigue you more
death is certain

Gradually, as if hypnotized, the audience aimlessly sways around the dance floor. Exiles from life. Death on the installment plan. The angel of death cackles and laughs. Smack knows: there is no hope. Flames erupt from his mouth. Wake up fools! Cape and kilt fly through the air revealing a skeleton and snake. God have mercy. Voodoo child and the serpent leap into the audience, but the clones don't seem to notice. Just another night in hell.

Actually, just another night at the Anti Club, one of the death-rock clubs in Hollywood. "Country and Western didn't work here," says owner Helen Guttman. "I tried punk but there was too much destruction. Death rock packs the place. This is the beginning of a new era of music." Dubbed "ghoulies" and "Goths" and "gore-rockers" by their peers, the morbid fans flock to see groups like Christian Death, Dead Hippie, and 45 Grave.

Owners Henry Peck and Joseph Books call their Fetish Club "a social arena for fallen angels." The club is a roving underground mecca, which has a new home every couple of weeks, although always in Hollywood. Faithful fans mystically reappear every Friday night to enjoy the post-prandial entertainment of the two-year-old club, which seems nothing more than a showcase for reincarnated characters from the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *The Munsters*. Capes, lace, and stud-

ded leather are mixed with chains, crosses, Nazi medallions, and Hells Angels' regalia, topped by hair or wigs in colors ranging from death black to psychedelic green. They consider Alice Cooper, Black Sabbath, The Damned, and the Cramps as progenitors, and Fetish patrons regularly request their songs, but the big favorite is "Bela Lugosi Is Dead," by Bauhaus.

Occasionally, performance artists create a so-called scene at the club. Lydia Lunch, called the "Queen of No Wave Music," by the *New York Times*, and Henry Rollins, the leader/singer of Black Flag, the premier punk band in Southern California, have appeared under the sobriquet "Why You Murder Me Productions." They picked people from the audience, pushed them into a small, dark, side room, a makeshift torture chamber, and subjected each victim to a mock-brutal interrogation. The verbal assaults got to the point: "Scum! Slime! Garbage! Why do you exist? Why should you continue to live? What have you ever done to justify your existence? Why don't you kill yourself?" were some of the philosophical questions screamed at lung-bursting pitch. Sort of est in the Twilight Zone.

"We had a few complaints," confesses Joseph Books. "There were some people who didn't want to be chosen." It never fails, does it, some people don't understand the difference between being a death rocker and a dead-beat. "I had a prodder but I didn't use it," says Lydia, certain that such benevolence absolves her of any guilt.

Lydia is one of those cute little girls that you just want to cuddle or possibly strangle. Hell-bent on antagonizing the general public, her rage and recklessness are often just affectations. However, there is something intrinsically desperate about her poetry (which has been published by Grove Press). Combining surreal images, deliberate vulgarity, wry humor, and impassioned pleas, she reflects the fears and discontent of today's young females. The former lead singer of Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, Lydia reveals a frightening world of illusion and disillusion in her last book *Adulterers Anonymous*, which she wrote with Exene Cervenka, vocalist for X.

"People got bored with punk," says Steve Sinclair, founder of Bemisbrain Records whose death-rock catalog includes *Hell Comes to Your House, Volumes I and II*. "We've sold 10,000 copies of *Volume I*," he says. "That's a gold record by underground record company standards."

One of the combos to reap royalties from this burgeoning scene is 45 Grave, brainchild of producer and guitar-wizard Paul Cutler. "Although we are morbid in some of our tastes, our approach is lighthearted," says Rob Graves, the group's bass player. "We are into religious imagery, but not because we are fascinated by witchcraft or Christianity. We don't take it seriously. We're just into horror movies, especially the stylized images of German Expressionist films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. When the band members lived together they had an altar in their living room and a coffin as a





coffee table. The coffin was a gift from Geza X, the producer of hit records for The Germs, Deadbeats, Weirdos, Dead Kennedys, Black Flag, and Josie Cotton.

Geza, notorious for having semi-naked girls hanging on crosses while he fronted for such groups as The Mommy-men, has abandoned morbid themes for psycho-pop music. "I experimented with negative imagery for a while," says Geza, "but now I find death motifs a bit irritating." However, Silver Chalice, his latest group, retains the spiritual roots which link all death-rock groups.

Now living in a barn in West Covina, California, the eccentric genius says he was brainwashed by reading "thousands of science-fiction books during grades one to eight." Outer space and Geza have a lot in common. A long-time musical force in the L.A. punk movement and a guitar virtuoso, he has popularized the fusion of punk, psychedelic, electronic, and pop music. "I'm adept at sucking people's brains," Geza simply states, when asked about his ability to create new sounds. His latest tricks include biting, singing and humming on the strings of his guitar. Jimi Hendrix roll over in your grave.

Another artist spearheading the genre is Simon Smallwood, lead singer of Dead Hippie. An intense young man, he writes severe lyrics attacking hypocrisy, apathy, politics, and the police. However, his favorite target is antisocial youth.

Wasting on a corner
not much else to say
when you're waiting for the coroner
to take your body away

Although Dead Hippie's name implies some sort of San Francisco psychedelic wilting flower power, the

group was launched on Halloween, 1981, as a battle-scarred U.S. Army combat unit lost somewhere in Vietnam, but still on patrol. Smallwood's stage persona is a resurrected battlefield casualty.

You've watched the old news clips and seen the films, now you can fondle your own mangled Vietnam vet. Smallwood is real punk. Now, the only thing left is for someone to blow his brains out on stage.

Dead Hippie uses quasi-classical arrangements to combine slashing guitars and intricate tempo-chord changes with heavy-metal attacks and punk energy: a sledgehammer, rollercoaster assault. Smallwood whirls around the stage and through the crowds in a convulsive, epileptic frenzy, screaming "you can't kill a hippie when he is already dead."

Living Dead, the group's album on Pulse Records, features Smallwood's angular arrows of existential angst. Smallwood is not a great vocalist, but he focuses the group's energy with impressive force. Sarcastic and genially cynical, he analyzes American culture with a wicked sense of perversity. "Blue, Red, and White," makes a mockery of American patriotism and goads the most sluggish listener to anger, exactly Smallwood's intention.

Dead Hippie's post-punk urgency, bizarre stage antics, and even its album cover is conceptually influenced by Jimmy Smack, perhaps death rock's spiritual patriarch, who is a 40-year-old classically trained ballet dancer. "The important thing about a dance background is that it influences you visually. That enables me to reach extremists on the edge of rock as well as the average person."

More than any other death-rocker, Smack seems to be on the extreme fringe/forefront of the movement.

He tries to mesmerize his listeners, employing mindlessly simple lyrics, sung in a kind of punk Gregorian chant, which create a brain mangling, maybe brain wasting, sound. And then, without realizing it, you're into it.

But, like some wine, the music doesn't travel. Mainstream rock venues in Hollywood, such as Club Lingerie, that now book groups such as .45 Grave, don't want Smack. "When I did my dance of death at the underwear place (Club Lingerie), two bouncers carried me out," recalls Jimmy in his usual gruff, apocalyptic voice. "They didn't want me." Probably because he deals massive doses of reality that leave the masses neither laughing or dancing.

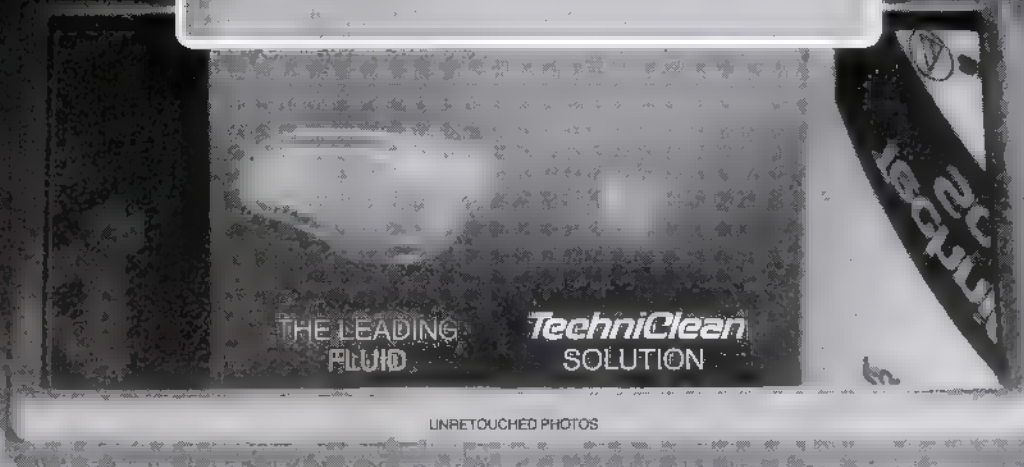
Your life's a mess
you couldn't care less
you need drugs to function
then man confess
death is certain

Not exactly one of Paul McCartney's silly love songs.

"People understand what I'm singing about because we all think about death," says Smack. Oh yeah, probably everyone's favorite subject too: Yo', brother, think the lightning bolt is gonna hit today?

"I want people to surrender to me like we all must surrender to death," continues the reigning Mr. Doom and Gloom.

Since it's inevitable, I don't see any reason for you to continue reading this story. No use wasting your time eating or fornicating or watching TV. Might as well walk to the nearest street and throw yourself in front of the next passing bus. I don't know why the Club Lingerie bothers to stay in business. Actually, who cares? Might as well just end this story here.



UNRETOUCHED PHOTOS

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SPINPATROL

In case you somehow missed these major news stories, we didn't . . .

Tot trampled in Cabbage Patch stampede, suit says

Weekly World News

A mother has sued Gimbel's department store, claiming her son was trampled by customers stampeding to buy Cabbage Patch dolls.

Catherine Giuliana of Hack-

ensack, N.J., said her son Richard, 4, suffers from behavior problems, nightmares and a fear of department stores as a result of his horrifying ordeal last year.

Helpless rabbits suffer so you can smell nice

CUDDLY, GENTLE animals are being tortured and killed so that uncaring humans can look and smell daintier.



RABBITS held in neck braces prior to being squirted in the eyes with toxic cosmetic

Priest & psychics confirm... GIRL, AGE 4, MADE PREGNANT BY GHOST

SUN

in the dead of night, the time when the starving hordes made its march to avoid detection by government troops searching for rebel guerrillas who have been fighting the Marxist regime for 20 years.

"Everyone was moving along the side of a road and not making a sound," Heidler said. "Silence was imperative, so I was stunned when I heard cries of terror from the natives."

"I turned around and my eyes were immediately riveted by a brilliant light in the sky. It looked like a huge, shimmering star. It kept getting bigger and bigger and I

UFO feeds thousands of starving Ethiopians

knew that it was something coming toward us.

"I thought at first that we had been discovered and that a government plane had been sent to kill us. There had been a number of bombings in the area in recent

months. It was only about a mile away when I realized that whatever it was, it was not an aircraft of this world."

"It was like a huge glowing saucer with blinking red, blue and amber lights that were very intense. The UFO seemed to be made of some kind of metallic substance and the upper half — the dome — revolved very slowly. The strangest thing was that it didn't make a whisper of sound."

"The natives were absolutely terror-stricken. Mothers threw themselves down and covered their children with their bodies. Some of the men tried to run away, but they were too weak from hunger and thirst."

"The spaceship moved off to the side only about 20 feet above the ground and began dropping cartons and sacks. They didn't fall hard, they just seemed to float down to us."

"The entire operation took only about two minutes. Then the ship hovered for a moment and just shot into the heavens. One instant it was there, the next, it was gone."

"It wasn't until morning that we were able to investigate the cargo that had been dropped to us. When I saw that it was food, I couldn't believe my eyes."

"There was enough to carry us all through the remainder of our journey to Sudan. Not one more person died along the way."

Heidler said he plans to file a full report of the bizarre "space drop," but said he doubts that it will be taken seriously by his mission superiors.

"I know they will think I'm mad," he said. "But that doesn't matter. Many thousands of people are alive today because they were gifted with food brought to them by people not of this world."

"To know that there are other beings in the universe with the capacity for compassion and brotherly love makes me believe there is hope for the salvation of us Earthlings after all."



By MICKEY MCGUIRE

Thousands of starving Ethiopians were snatched from the jaws of death when they were "gifted" with tons of grain and powdered milk — delivered by alien beings from outer space!

The incredible act of interplanetary humanity was seen as a miracle by the 6,000 wretched Africans making a hopeless trek across the barren wasteland in an effort to reach a food relief center in Sudan, still hundreds of miles away.

The desperate nomads, many of them mothers clutching their half-dead babies, flung themselves to the parched earth when a colossal starship arced silently out of the night sky in a blaze of flashing lights to drop its life-saving cargo of food.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the space gift came at a time when millions of Christians throughout the world were preparing to observe the holiest time of the year — Christmas!

"It was a Christmas miracle," declared Wolfgang Heidler of Mercy Missions, one of the many relief agencies struggling to distribute food to the millions of dying Ethiopians. "I saw it all with my own eyes and that's the only way to describe what happened."

"Thousands of men, women and little children had already died along the way and I knew in my heart that the others would never reach the food center. The agony of their fate was becoming more than I could bear."

"But I am a man of God and I could not give up hope. I, along with the other mission members, had to do everything possible to save these unfortunate people. I was hoping for a miracle, but I never dreamed it would come on a UFO."

The starship made its Earth call

Wedding Shockers

Here comes the groom — he's the one in the dress!



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The Red Hot Chili Peppers are the greatest rock band in the world. You can tell by watching them perform or you can guess by listening to their forceful, natty and sly album: *Real Men Don't Kill Coyotes* (EMI Records).

The Chili Peppers' music is an unprecedented blend of styles, mixing Hank Williams with rap, Led Zeppelinoid arpeggios with R & B chicken-scratch guitar, producing a sort of seamless fusion of hard core, Delta Blues, hip hop and straight-ahead rock. They are very black, very white and never gray. On stage, bare chests, arms and legs smeared with day-glo paint, wearing weird hats and masks, moving like pinballs or witch docs or barefoot on hot asphalt, they're as wild as Iggy and the Stooges or P-Funk or Zulus or Mardi Gras Injuns.

Being the greatest band is no easy task. For one thing, everyone wants to interview you, so I decided to ask the Chili Peppers some questions that *Record Planet* or *Guitar Slave Magazine* might forget or never think of. Flea plays bass, Jack plays guitar, Cliff drums, and Anthony sings.

SPIN: Do you remember your first memories?

FLEA: The earliest memory I have, I was in Australia. I'm from Australia. I was about three years old and we had a cat and I was holding the tail and my friend was holding the cat and we both wanted the cat. That's my first memory.

SPIN: Did the cat survive?

FLEA: I don't remember.

ANTHONY: My earliest memory is my little tiger that I used to have on my tricycle. You'd pull the trigger and the tiger would roar and because my name is Tony they called me Tony the Tiger.

JACK: My earliest memory is when I was about four years old me and this really rough-hewn little blonde girl were around the side of the house and we had the neighbor kid and we were putting little red berries in his butt. Then we went over to his house and his mom went to wipe him or something and she came out and yelled, "You are in trouble!" I remember walking home and my mom saying "Hi" and I never knew to this day if that lady busted me for putting berries in her kid's butt.

CLIFF: I remember slithering out of my mother. It was nice and warm and cozy and I came out and I thought the lights were really harsh. Then the doctor spanked me. Life isn't worth living sometimes.

SPIN: I remember not wanting to come out in the first place.

CLIFF: Me too. I was shy. I resisted.

JACK: Are you in therapy?

SPIN: No.

JACK: Because in therapy you're supposed to get in touch with that stuff.

SPIN: What's your most memorable dream?

FLEA: About three nights ago I had a

dream that our manager was eaten by a shark. I woke up crying.

SPIN: Usually sharks won't eat managers out of professional courtesy.

JACK: When I was five I lived in Lake Hiawatha, New Jersey, and I used to come up to New York to visit relatives and we used to watch "Million Dollar Movie" over and over again. Remember they used to show the same film over and over?

SPIN: Yeah, once when I was sick I saw *The Thing* nine times in one week.

JACK: This was *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* and the cops legs dangle from the tyrannosaurus' mouth. Well, the day before the first day of kindergarten I dreamed I was walking through the woods and my mom and my older sister were saying, "Oh, let's go see the monster" and I was saying, "No, I don't want to see the monster" and we ended up in this room under a table; it was just about to bite my head off and I woke up screaming and I had to go to school. It was really horrible. It's still horrible. I figured out that the monster is my dad.

CLIFF: My favorite dream is I'm watching "Leave It To Beaver" with a friend of mine who I'm no longer friends with because he got into drugs really heavily and we had a falling out. We're watching the show and Wally put heroin in Beaver's orange juice and killed him. I thought, "This is really weird. I've never seen a Beaver episode that's so heavy. Isn't it a little unusual for the Beaver to die?"

ANTHONY: Dreams are for wimps.

FLEA: The Red Hot Chili Peppers are a dream. I'd like to talk about actuality. I'd also like to talk about verisimilitude; I'd like to expound on dichotomy.

SPIN: Do you believe in reincarnation?

ANTHONY: That's a question for Jack.

JACK: I'm not sane enough to give a technical answer, but I do think things move on from here and that it's real important to take care of your body.

SPIN: Any clues about what you might have been before?

JACK: A girl? I want to go on record as saying I was a girl in my past life.

SPIN: Do you have American Express Cards?

CLIFF: I have an AT&T Calling Card.

JACK: I'm highly against credit cards. I believe that someday, just like it says in Revelations, they're going to print a number on your head with infrared light. But if I could get an American Express Card I would.

ANTHONY: I have a serious feeling that I might have been Napoleon in a past life. Seriously. When I went back to France last summer I was standing on a ship out in the ocean and I felt the entire spirit of Napoleon come over me.

JACK: How about... a friend of Napoleon.

ANTHONY: No, I think I was Napoleon.

CLIFF: Flea used to be Hitler.

FLEA: But I'm not Hitler now. Jack calls me Hitler all the time.

CLIFF: We don't think he's Hitler, but we salute him.



WHAT'S RED HOT AND CHILI?

FLEA: Before we play everyone bow down and kisses my feet.

CLIFF: And that's quite a feat, if you've seen his feet.

SPIN: Who would you like to meet? You never know who might be reading this.

FLEA: I'd like to meet Charles Bukowski.

SPIN: That shouldn't be too hard. He lives in California.

FLEA: Yeah, but how do I get in touch with the slob?

SPIN: Maybe he'll read this and get in touch with you. How can he get in touch with you?

FLEA: My phone number is 213-463-6379.

SPIN: What are your favorite Black English expressions?

CLIFF: "Kiss my ass." It's always been one of my favorites.

JACK: Kith ath, thpot o' tea.

ANTHONY: Keep it comin' from the bottom of the bootie.

CLIFF: Put your hands down motherfucker, so I can jack your chest.

JACK: That's beautiful. I'd like to talk about nylon-socks with high tops.

CLIFF: Yeah, black Converse hi-tops. We're from the Midwest.

FLEA: My favorite Black English expression is "Rock the spot."

JACK: I don't like "fresh." I don't like "chill."

FLEA: Chill!! I love "chill."

SPIN: Do you have any hobbies?

FLEA: I read, jack off, play basketball and play music. I read Charles Bukowski, San Shepard and Ernest Hemingway. And comic books.

CLIFF: I jack off and read. I like Raymond Chandler, Wyndham Lewis, comic books.

JACK: I read *Dune* last year. I like *Musicalian* and *Creem*.

SPIN: Is there a fifth Chili Pepper?

FLEA: Our manager, Lindy Goetz.

JACK: We call him Dad.

FLEA: He has a butt nuzzler.

SPIN: What's a butt nuzzler?

CLIFF: A butt nuzzler is basically a San Francisco style mustache. It has to be worn with a Pendleton shirt and worn boots.

SPIN: What do you think of your producer, Andy Gill?

CLIFF: Great guitar player. He was in the Gang of Four.

ANTHONY: Not as great as Leadbelly.

FLEA: We picked him for a producer because he was uncircumcised.

SPIN: Do you have a motto or anything similar?

CLIFF: Captain Beefheart has the best quote about playing music and it means a lot to me. He always said, "Hit it to hell in the breadbasket and fingerfuck the devil." I think what he meant was always play every note like it was going to be your last.

FLEA: And that's how we play every time whenever we play live. We play every show like it's the last show.

ANTHONY: It's the truth.

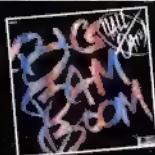
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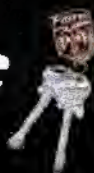
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